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Gaby Frey

Private Goes Public: Self-Narrativisation in Brian Friel's Plays

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To my family

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I. Introduction

In Brian Friel's writing, the characters' understanding of the terms *public* and *private* is largely determined by the (post)colonial background against which the plays are set and by the positions which the characters occupy within their own families or tribal communities. As far as the public realm in Friel's oeuvre is concerned, its representation is mostly consistent with other Anglo-Irish literary texts. For centuries, the public sphere in Anglo-Irish literature has, at least implicitly, been associated with not only the presence of the occupying power but also its dominant discourse. Prime examples of authoritative figures are, for instance, the estranged landlords in Maria Edgeworth's novels *Castle Rackrent* and *The Absentee* as well as political or religious leaders who are shown to govern their communities with uncontested power in texts such as Seamus Deane's *Reading in the Dark* or Frank McCourt's *Angela's Ashes: A Memoir of a Childhood*. The Irish inhabitants who were deprived of their land and unable to define themselves or to express their personal points of view publicly, therefore, regularly withdrew from the public to the private realm. In order to protect themselves and their families, they refrained from articulating their personal opinions in public. Hence, the local population's silence or absence have become notable features of the public domain. However, I want to suggest that Pine's remark on the inarticulateness of the main protagonist Gar O'Donnell in Friel's play *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* is true for many texts in Anglo-Irish literature: "Silence offers security, but it is also an open prison" (*Diviner* 76). As the Irish were considered the uncivilised *other* within their native land and were faced with the stereotypical rendering of their characters in the public sphere, they have shown a strong tendency to challenge the oppressors' denigrating view of them in private.[1] Presenting the private space in Anglo-Irish literature as the space of true Irishness, they turned this space into a domain where their individual versions of truth are publicised in order to avoid complete disempowerment, linguistic imprisonment or cultural loss.

The frequent deprivation of land not only meant that the local inhabitants felt they had better retreat from public space but it also had a psychological effect on them because it shattered their belief in a stable relationship between place and *self*. In her essay "Brian Friel's Sense of Place," Lojek argues that, as a result of these historical and cultural developments, "[i]n Ireland place always

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[1] Boehmer states that "[t]he concept of the Other, which is built on the thought of, *inter alia*, Hegel and Sartre, signifies that which is unfamiliar and extraneous to a dominant subjectivity, the opposite or negative against which an authority is defined" (21, original emphasis).

matters" and "[u]nsurprisingly, place also matters in the plays of Brian Friel" (177). In fact, in Friel's oeuvre, the characters' sense of place and *self* is even further undermined. Lojek describes County Derry, where Friel has spent most of his life and which normally functions as the larger setting of his plays, as "a community of balanced factions: unionist/republican, Protestant/Catholic, English/Irish, colonizers/colonized, urban/rural, haves/have-nots, past/present" (177). She then concludes that the "factions and boundaries" in Friel's plays, where "[c]ommunities are divided, opinions clash, memories vary, individuals struggle with internal splits," serve as strong indications for "Ireland's divided self" (177–178). Due to the dysfunctionality of the communities and families depicted in Friel's plays, the characters do not inhabit a realm that could be described as an atmosphere of ease, solicitude or mutual understanding. Consequently, the private space in Friel's writing is often as unsatisfying and frustrating as the public sphere is.[2] Finding themselves in circumstances that highlight their powerlessness, Friel's main protagonists fail to define or shape the public and the private realm according to their personal ideas or desires. Feeling uprooted, displaced and alienated within their own homes, families or communities, these characters, therefore, frequently perceive both the public and the private sphere as heteronomous and hostile.

As a result of the firm link between space, *self* and the power of language, the terms *public* and *private* are not restricted to the spatial dimension in this study, but are closely related to the characters' notions of and experiences with *home*, *family*, *identity* and *truth*. In many plays, Friel's main protagonists are engaged in a life-long struggle for the private space of their home and family to be defined by happiness, understanding, autonomy and a secure sense of their *self*. According to Woodward, "[i]dentity gives us a sense of who [we] are and to some extent satisfies a demand for some degree of stability and of security" (xi). In the endeavour of securing one's identity, narratives, and the necessary language to produce these narratives, play a vital role as telling "stories about ourselves" helps us "to make sense of who we are" (25). Additionally, in a postcolonial context, the language used to express one's identity provides a character with the opportunity to, at least partly, reduce the disempowerment formerly suffered, to move beyond the state of paralysis caused by heteronomy or displacement and to undo the sense of alienation with one's *home* and *self*. However, in Friel's plays, the characters' struggles often prove futile as their disclosures of private knowledge, in which they publicise their viewpoints or stories and try to express exactly who they are, are often witnessed by the

[2] The dysfunctionality of the family is a phenomenon which can also be observed in texts by Sean O'Casey or James Joyce. A discussion of public and private space in their writing can be found in Chapter III (p. 48–55 and 70–83).

audience only and do not lead to another character's empathy or a deeper understanding of the protagonist's inner self.

Referring to the effects which "*dislocation*" and "*cultural denigration*, the conscious and unconscious oppression of the indigenous personality and culture by a supposedly superior racial or cultural model" have on a character's "valid and active sense of self," Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin identify "a pervasive concern with the myths of identity and authenticity" as a key characteristic in "all post-colonial literatures in english [sic]" (*The Empire* 9, original emphasis). In Friel's play *Translations*, the fate of the mute character Sarah Johnny Sally echoes "the special post-colonial crisis of identity" which occurs when "an effective identifying relationship between self and place" has been lost or, as in Sarah's case, when a character is entirely defined from the outside by the dominant discourse and is thus deprived of her own myth of identity (*The Empire* 8). In the first scene of *Translations*, Manus, the older son of the main protagonist Hugh O'Donnell, in whose hedge school the play is set, is trying to teach Sarah to speak a few words in order to enable her to express her inner *self* and cross the deep gulf of silence that has dictated her life up to this point.[3] Encouraged by Manus, whom she holds in great affection, Sarah tentatively names herself for the first time:

MANUS. Come on, Sarah. This is our secret. […] Nobody's listening. Nobody hears you. […]
SARAH. My…
MANUS. Good.
SARAH. My…
MANUS. Great.
SARAH. My name…
MANUS. Yes?
SARAH. My name is…
MANUS. Yes? (*Sarah pauses. Then in a rush.*)
SARAH. My name is Sarah.
MANUS. Marvellous! Bloody marvellous! (*Manus hugs Sarah. She smiles in shy, embarrassed pleasure.*) […] Now we're really started! Nothing'll stop us now! Nothing in the wide world! […] Soon you'll be telling me all the secrets that have been in that head of yours all these years. (*Translations* 12)

[3] As Catholic children were banned from attending classes in schools, "the masters taught their pupils […] in makeshift classrooms, sometimes consisting of little more than the shelter of a hedge or barn" (Milne 238). These *Hedge Schools*, which were established during the 18th and 19th century, "had thus to be hidden away and run on an ad hoc basis. Pupils of all ages were in the same class, and their parents paid the master a small fee in coin or in kind. Despite the disadvantages under which they operated, hedge schools had varied curricula, including Latin and Greek, and some schoolmasters were reputed to be very learned" ("Hedge Schools" 365). "The masters, usually self-taught or former hedge scholars themselves […], were often itinerant, setting up a school in a cottage or lodging with a family in return for teaching the children" (Milne 238).

Indirectly, the act of naming allows Sarah to forge her *self* and her identity, unfettered from the complete heteronomy she was exposed to in the past. Trying to overcome her inarticulateness, Sarah, therefore, becomes an impressive example of a character who makes an active effort to establish a linguistic link "between the personal and the social," between her self and the space or the people that surround her (Woodward, vii). In a wider context, however, I want to argue that Sarah's "act of personal identification," her disclosure and the denial of total heteronomy can be interpreted as emblematic of the Anglo-Irish writers' struggle to regain their voice, control or power in the literature of their country (Jones 70).

Having endured the solitude caused by her silence, or rather her inarticulateness, up to this point, Sarah's attempt at self-definition represents the first step towards reclaiming her identity and recalls Steiner's proposition that "*[l]anguage is the main instrument of man's refusal to accept the world as it is*" (228, original emphasis). Sarah's deliberate action, therefore, brings a close to, what Deane refers to as, "[t]he voice of power" which "tells one kind of fiction – the lie," and what he identified as "a traditional feature of the Irish condition" in Friel's writing (Introduction 18). Hence, the utterance "My name is Sarah" allows the female protagonist to linguistically create an alternative world in which the space she inhabits is no longer shaped by other characters' discourse but is a space where power, language and *self* coincide for the first time (*Translations* 12).

Sarah's achievement notwithstanding, Manus' triumphant claim that "[n]othing'll stop us now [...] [n]othing in the wide world" and that "[s]oon you'll be telling me all the secrets that have been in that head of yours all these years" is a misconception of Sarah's prospects (12). When Sarah discovers Manus' girlfriend Maire kissing Lieutenant Yolland, one of the soldiers representing the British occupying power in the village, the stage directions reveal that, at first "*[s]he stands shocked, staring at them. Her mouth works. Then almost to herself*" she mutters the name of the man who taught her to articulate her thoughts: "Manus ... Manus" (52–53).[4] Soon after her gasp has shattered her own and Manus' hopes and dreams for the future, she loses the ability to express herself again. She relapses into muteness and loses the self-confidence that she had gained in the process of mastering speech. Thus, Sarah's personal development underlines Welch's assertion that, in Friel's theatre, language "is held up for scrutiny" because "it reveals the power it has

[4] In Friel's texts, all stage directions are conventionally set in italics. To conform to the original texts, references to stage directions will always be in italics without being specially indicated.

over people as individuals" (147). I agree with Welch's conclusion that Friel's writing, therefore, displays a profound "distrust of language" and "a preference for silence" on a textual level (148). However, a number of dramaturgical techniques, such as the introduction of commentators or the retrospective presentation of the plot, which the playwright uses in order to make private knowledge public on a theatrical level, link Friel with other Anglo-Irish writers, such as Seamus Deane, Frank McCourt, James Joyce or Samuel Beckett, whose characters invariably break the silence that epitomizes their existence. In this context, Manus' announcement that Sarah will now be able to disclose all the private secrets "that have been in that head [...] all these years" is as symbolic of postcolonial Anglo-Irish literature as Sarah's act of self-representation was (*Translations* 12).

The characters' continual disclosure further draws attention to Woodward's conviction that, from a psychological point of view, "the subject desires a unitary self" (18). Sensing that they have been misunderstood by the occupying power throughout history, Anglo-Irish authors have repeatedly made their characters share secret or intimate knowledge with the reader or the audience and publicise their alternative viewpoints. Addressing the Irish population's tendency to recall past events and, thus, seize their opportunity to present these events from their own points of view in his essay *Anglo-Irish Attitudes*, Kiberd claims that "[t]he Irish are accused of never forgetting, but that is because the English never remember. The Irish are accused of endlessly repeating their past, but they are forced to do so precisely because the English have failed to learn from theirs" (15). Thus, the Irish keep recalling certain instances of their history because their specific viewpoint has regularly failed to be taken into serious consideration by the English. Drawing an analogy between Kiberd's statement about Irish history and the representation of the Irish inhabitants in literature, I want to suggest that Anglo-Irish authors have persisted in making their characters' personal versions of truths known as they felt that their specific Irish point of view was still not adequately represented in the public sphere. Constantly disclosing their perspectives, the characters attempt to reclaim power and control by bridging the discrepancy between *self*, *other*, and place, which derived from their marginal roles and the considerable loss of linguistic power in society. However, despite the writers' presentation of what they regarded as a more truthful or authentic view of Ireland and its inhabitants, they regularly had to acknowledge that their efforts had been in vain. Although they had tried to rectify what they saw as typical tribal or national characteristic traits, those in power of dominant discourse continued propagating the same deceptive and derogatory stereotypes and the same misleading stories of the Irish population. For many centuries, this phenom-

enon kept alive and active the Irish need to 'write back' – or "[strike] back" as Rushdie expressed it – from the periphery to the centre (218).[5]

The aim of this study is to focus on Anglo-Irish writers who have felt that the Irish population has continually been *mis*understood and, therefore, *mis*represented by those who shape the public sphere. Although aspects of public and private spaces and the representation of the Irish characters by the voice of power in Anglo-Irish literature have been discussed by a number of critics of Anglo-Irish literature, the distinction between public and private realms has never been the sole focus of attention of a scholarly work. Nowhere have public and private spaces been considered to have a strong philosophical dimension. Whereas *place* has, predominantly, been understood as a spatial entity, the two realms will repeatedly be regarded as mental concepts in this study and it will be explored to what extent the exact understanding of the two spheres shapes the behaviour and outlook on the world of Friel's characters. Unlike Pine, who counts as private those plays in Friel's oeuvre which are set in the home of a family and as public those which address political or historical events, I believe that the use of the two spheres is much more complex. As a result of the characters' frequent narrativisation of their personal points of view in Anglo-Irish literature in general and in Brian Friel's writing in particular, the publicising of private knowledge in the public sphere means that the two realms are often blurred and at times they even merge.

Anglo-Irish writers have chosen a number of different approaches to share their characters' private and often intimate knowledge in public in order to reveal in their texts what they regarded as true Irishness. The earliest examples of Anglo-Irish writers who disapproved of the stage-Irishmen – the stereotypical representation of the Irish as idle, stupid or vainglorious – and who felt a strong urge to oppose dominant discourse date back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This study will begin by exploring some of these approaches of revealing private truth since this period of time, before Friel's usage of public and private space is examined in detail. As the concepts of *public* and *private* are much more complex and multifaceted in Friel's oeuvre than in most other texts in Anglo-Irish literature, the playwright's unveiling of his characters' hidden truths serves a number of additional functions. Concentrating on the nexus between public and private space and the divergent

[5] In their introductory comments to Rushdie's article "The Empire Writes Back with a Vengeance," Korff and Ringel-Eichinger indicate that Rushdie's "title is a reference to the film *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980) from the *Star Wars* series" (216). Moreover, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin's book *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (1989) underlines that, soon after its first uses, "the phrase 'the Empire writes back' became a sort of slogan to cover post-colonial literature" in general (Korff and Ringel-Eichinger 216).

knowledge that is produced by these realms, Friel focuses on the inner tribal or familial frictions that different levels of awareness generate. The question of what is discussed in public or what is discussed in private, therefore, results in the playwright's meticulous examination of his characters' psychology and their philosophical outlook on the world. Thus, the distinction between the terms *public* and *private* has an ontological dimension in Friel's writing, and his treatment of the public sphere moves far beyond the national or tribal concerns of many of his predecessors in Anglo-Irish literature. More concerned with striving for fulfilment, happiness and wisdom than for authenticity and autochthony, his characters are not primarily concerned with rewriting the story of the tribe, but they are driven by their quest for meaning in life. Against this background, Friel's exploration of the public and the private realm in his characters' homes and families not only provides the reader with a model of human communication and of social coexistence but it also offers insight into how the two spheres fundamentally shape his characters' basic assumptions on the condition of their individual *Dasein* in the world.

To be able to situate Brian Friel in Anglo-Irish literature by comparing and contrasting his use of the public and the private realm and his characters' disclosure of private or intimate knowledge with those of other Anglo-Irish writers in my conclusion in Chapter V, I will first trace the theoretical debate of the public and the private realm in history in Chapter II and indicate how, according to Lehnert, psychological and sociological insights influenced the understanding and the perception of these spheres at the beginning of the twentieth century. The basic assumptions of what constitutes the public and private realms today will then serve as a scaffold for my analysis of the meaning ascribed to these domains in postcolonial Anglo-Irish literature in Chapter III and Brian Friel's oeuvre in Chapter IV. Whereas the private pieces of truth revealed in *The Poems of the Dispossessed*, stemming from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, illustrate the colonisers' brutality and the sheer misery endured by the local inhabitants, Maria Edgeworth's novels and essays shift the emphasis from a specific event to the overall impact that the colonial demeanour had on the Irish. As Edgeworth debunks the British representation of the Irish population as an invention and, therefore, a pure myth which, according to Oscar Wilde, "attribute[s] to the Irish all those traits of poetry, emotion and soft charm which a stern Victorian code had forced [an Englishman] to deny in himself," her writing functions as a catalyst for authors – such as John Millington Synge or Sean O'Casey – who strive for authenticity (as quoted by Kiberd, *Anglo-Irish Attitudes* 7 – 8). Synge's hope to preserve what he considered to be true Irishness in his encounter of the Aran Islands or O'Casey's disgust with the political changes in Ireland and the far-reaching

consequences for Irish families and their private realm will then be compared to texts by William Butler Yeats, James Joyce and Samuel Beckett. Whereas Yeats aimed at restoring the country's past, Joyce believed that both the public and private spheres in Dublin at the beginning of the twentieth century were defined by paralysis, which the city would have to overcome in order to undergo a development. Beckett's plays *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame* where space is used in a much more arbitrary manner as his settings are more defined by the characters' notion of their existential state of being than by their actual location on earth, will lead to my reading of Friel's plays. I will begin my interpretation of how power structures chiefly influence what is private and public in Friel's plays with a few introductory comments on the impact 'place' has in Friel's work. After first analysing various (meta-)theatrical techniques to illustrate the numerous ways Friel has found to disclose private knowledge despite his characters' lack of communication, I will then examine how Friel's characters react when they are exposed to public pressure or manifestations of power, before turning to those characters who use their power to diminish the opportunities of those that surround them. The last two sections in Chapter IV will explore to what extent the protagonists' public and private utterances and their understanding of the two spheres are shaped by their notions of language and their inarticulateness when trying to share their most intimate sensations, feelings and thoughts with those who form their 'home' or their inner circle of friends and family.

II. Concepts of the Public and the Private: Theoretical Approaches

The difficulty of defining the terms *public* and *private* derives, on the one hand, from people's largely individual understanding of the domains and, on the other hand, from their historically and culturally shaped conceptualisations. According to Barley, different cultures also have vastly different conceptions of these terms (8). Even within Western-European cultures, where a similar distinction is made between *public* and *private*, as a result of historical and social developments, there is no longer the sharp contrast which existed in Greek and most of Roman civilisation; nowadays, the two spheres often overlap, at times they even concur (Geuss 6). Thus, apart from being shaped by one's personality, the boundaries have been considerably blurred over the centuries and as a result of this process they are "constantly being renegotiated" (Landes 3).

In order to illustrate the transformations which these two realms have undergone in the course of the centuries and in an attempt to identify distinctive features and codes which influence the conception of the public and the private sphere, miscellaneous studies, in such diverse fields as history, philosophy, sociology, and anthropology, have been conducted. From a Saussurian standpoint, these numerous approaches underline how wide a range of signifieds the terms *public* and *private* cover.

For my analysis of the *public* and the *private* in Anglo-Irish literature in general and in Brian Friel's plays in particular, I will draw on specific aspects of a number of different theoretical approaches. Predominantly, my focus will be on Hannah Arendt's chapter "The Public and the Private Realm" in her study *The Human Condition* (originally published in 1958), Jürgen Habermas' *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (1962), Stanley Benn and Gerald Gaus' sociological approach *Public and Private in Social Life* (1983), Antoine Prost and Gérard Vincent's *Riddles of Identity in Modern Times* (1987, the fifth volume of Philippe Ariès and Georges Duby's study *A History of Private Life*), Gertrud Lehnert's *Mit dem Handy in der Peepshow: Die Inszenierung des Privaten im öffentlichen Raum* (1999) and Wolfgang Sofsky's *Privacy: A Manifesto* (2007). Rather than presenting comprehensive overviews of these texts, I will offer a brief summary of the general assumptions. The major historical transformations of the two spheres will, however, be outlined in some greater detail since the tendencies described by Habermas and Arendt were taken to the extreme in Anglo-Irish literature. Thereafter, only features which strengthen my argument with regard to the

spatial interpretation of Anglo-Irish texts or which will help to define the needs or sorrows encountered by Brian Friel's characters will be extracted.

In his introduction to "Public and Private Spheres in France," Prost stresses that the original establishment of the public and the private domain is a human invention, and he indicates that, as a result of social changes, constant modifications of the two realms are to be expected:

> Private life is not something given in nature from the beginning of time. It is a historical reality, which different societies have construed in different ways. The boundaries of private life are not laid down once and for all; the division of human activity between public and private spheres is subject to change. (3)

He further maintains that "[p]rivate life makes sense only in relation to public life; its history is first of all the history of its definition," and he concludes that the establishment of private space is closely entangled with the one of its frontiers (3). In his study *Privacy: A Manifesto*, Sofsky confirms Prost's view that the history of private space originates in certain realms being marked off from others. He regards this development as by no means "self-evident" and describes the process as "a historical and anthropological fact" (24).

Nonetheless, Sofsky and Prost, as well as Bachelard in his *Poetics of Space*, stress how significant the invention of walls was in the history of people's attempt to protect their own sphere of privacy and intimacy from the outside world.[1] Sofsky values the wall as "one of humanity's most important discoveries" and compares this step to the invention of "the wheel, the plow, or writing" (23). Within a short period of time, however, this private/public distinction, as inside or outside the wall of one's own sphere, initiated a considerable range of social developments and the "separation was enforced by a series of detailed prescriptions" (Prost 3). The public realm outside the wall turned into a sphere where "the pressures of society, vocational obligations, the demands of the community and state dominate" (Sofsky 23). On the other hand, the sphere created behind the wall, this hidden and protected space that was distinguished from the public realm, corresponds – according to Prost at least theoretically – to domesticity, family and household (51). As my study of

[1] Studying "the dialectics of within and without, [...] of open and closed," Bachelard's main focus in *The Poetics of Space* is on "the human value of the sorts of space that may be grasped, that may be defended against adverse forces, the space we love" (xxxix and xxxv). Arguing that the space established behind these walls "nearly always exercises an attraction" because "it concentrates being within limits that protect" (xxxvi), Bachelard is convinced that a human being's life behind the walls "begins well, it begins enclosed, protected, all warm in the bosom of the house" (7). Although most of Friel's protagonists have lost this sense of well-being and protection, their yearning for this state "when being is being-well, when the human being is deposited in a being-well, in the well-being originally associated with being" is one of the main driving forces in their lives (7).

Friel's plays will show, it is precisely this domain which Sofsky calls "the refuge of the family, friendship, and leisure time" and which Friel's characters know as their 'home' that functions as the focal point of the vast majority of the playwright's settings (23).[2]

Trying to define *public* and *private* before the above established background, most critics agree that, in its most general sense, the term *public* is synonymous with what can be seen and heard by anyone as well as with what is commonly accessible to anyone, whereas *private* connotes that which is concealed or withdrawn from the public sphere and public sight. In this context, *private* describes what is not easily recognisable: a space where accessibility is either barred or thought to be entirely under the control of the individual. Space in this context can refer to property or possessions as well as to dreams, feelings, thoughts, passions, fantasies or memories; in other words, private space may be a physical entity like one's home or house or a mental concept such as one's inner world. Uneasy about precisely this hidden or – to use Arendt's expression – *dark* element in a space they cannot control, those in power of society have rarely respected people's need for private spheres (64). Nevertheless, Sofsky argues that "[t]here has never been a society in which people have not sought to occupy their own terrain and to defend it against attacks" (24). After all, mankind has always undertaken considerable efforts to minimise heteronomy in order to protect its own personal sphere and freedom:

> Privacy […] is the individual's fortress. It is an area free of domination, the only one under the individual's control. The private comprises what is no one else's concern. It is neither public nor manifest. The private is not for other eyes, ears, or hands; it is not shared with others and is not accessible to them. (Sofsky 12)

However, this aspect of secrecy or concealment has its own shortcomings; while public knowledge, which is both seen and heard, is closely associated with truth and reality, the private, which is by definition being hidden and veiled from the public realm, cannot only be considered potentially harmful by those in power, but it may be taken or treated as non-existent, too. Arendt addresses this difficulty when she outlines an extreme form of private human existence:

> To live an entirely private life means above all to be deprived of things essential to a truly human life: to be deprived of the reality that comes from being seen and heard by others, […] to be deprived of the possibility of achieving something more permanent

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[2] The definition of *home* and its conceptualisations in Anglo-Irish autobiographies as well as in Friel's plays will be closely examined in chapters III (p. 55–65) and IV (p. 204–229).

> than life itself. The privation of privacy lies in the absence of others; as far as they are concerned, private man does not appear, and therefore it is as though he did not exist. Whatever he does remains without significance and consequence to others, and what matters to him is without interest to other people. (58)

The condition discussed by Arendt, uncommon as it may appear these days, accurately summarises life and reality as it was encountered in antiquity by slaves, women, children, literally by anyone except the *pater familias*, the head of the household, who ruled the private sphere with uncontested and often despotic power and who was the only member of the household to be at home in both the private and the public domain. Appearance, therefore, produces reality and is closely related to the public. What can be seen or heard is unlikely to be questioned in its existence, while the private world, as long as it is not articulated, belongs to the hidden realm and might be regarded as non-existent; hence, feelings and thoughts "lead an uncertain, shadowy kind of existence unless and until they are transformed, deprivatized and deindividualized [...] into a shape to fit them for public appearance" (Arendt 50). This statement is on a par with Berkeley's modification of Descartes' dictum 'cogito ergo sum' into "*esse est percipi*" (Eliot 29, original emphasis). Perception thus produces existence and shapes space: only that which is perceived exists. Public space in this context would denote that which can be perceived by anyone, whereas private space describes what is only perceived by at least one person, who can shape his or her own sphere. Strikingly, Arendt's description of "an entirely private life" is at the same time perfectly representative of many postcolonial countries such as Ireland (58). Where entire peoples or communities were silenced by the dominant discourse of the colonisers, they were forced to withdraw into the private or, as it were, mute realm. Retreating from public space allowed these people to protect their own lives at the expense of sacrificing their own – publicly acknowledged – reality.[3]

Approaching the issue of the *public* and the *private* from a historical point of view, both Habermas and Arendt argue that, although much of what shapes the public and the private realm nowadays originated in the eighteenth century, the initial distinction between the spheres was established as early as in Greek times. Greek society distinguished the sphere of the *polis* (state or community), common to all free citizens, from the sphere of the *oikos* (house or dwelling place), pertaining to the individual and closely related to the domestic realm

[3] As the vast number of postcolonial texts published since the twentieth century proves and as Arendt recognised as early as 1958, storytelling offers those communities and people whose realities were ignored or silenced by the dominant discourse of the colonisers an opportunity to reclaim their own pasts, personal truths and perspectives.

(Habermas 3–4).[4] Arendt observes that, for the Greeks, "[t]he distinction between a private and a public sphere of life corresponds to the household and the political realms" (28). Since the private realm was ruled by the head of the household, the private space, unlike the public, espoused a hierarchical structure. The private realm was characterised by the use of violence and force, and it left no space for freedom (30–32).[5] The *polis*, on the other hand, was the sphere in which the free citizens, the heads of the household, met as equals without one exercising power over the other. Power was thus an instrument used exclusively in the private realm of ancient Greek society (32). Habermas strongly disagrees with Arendt, dismissing her notion of power distribution in ancient Greece as a theoretical construct. In reality, he argues, it was enormously prestigious in Greek society to convince other citizens of one's own view in political debates; persuasion is thus regarded as a means of exercising linguistic power over others (4).[6]

However, this pure distinction between public and private spaces did not survive for long. In fact, there has been a tug-of-war between the two realms, an endless oscillation with one always slightly dominating the other. In addition, whenever the boundaries separating the private and the public sphere "shifted and solidified, the substances of life also changed" (Prost 7). Thus, Sofsky claims that

> [t]he history of privacy has never run straight. It has known relapses and leaps forward; sometimes it has gone back to earlier stages or opened up previously unknown areas. Periods of relative freedom have followed periods of intervention, supervision, and regression. The private sphere has repeatedly been compressed by the pressure of the collective, the society, or the authorities until people remembered how to evade official expectations and protect secrets from organized indiscretion. (28)

While Roman society maintained and cultivated a fairly clear distinction between the two domains, the public sphere during the Middle Ages was merely of a 'representative' character; it was the ruler's personal attributes,

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4 The translations of the terms *polis* and *oikos* are taken from Liddell and Scott's dictionary *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Vol. II: 1204–5 and 1433–4).

5 *Freedom* had a different connotation at the time: "To be free meant both not to be subject to the necessity of life or to the command of another *and* not to be in command oneself. It meant neither to rule nor to be ruled" (Arendt 32, original emphasis). In this context, freedom was only found in the sphere of the polis.

6 All of the Anglo-Irish texts examined in my study as well as many other postcolonial texts around the globe strongly support Habermas' claim. Using language as a means of power, each of these texts, in one way or another, linguistically *re*claims public space or truth that were initially lost to the colonising power. Characters in these texts, therefore, try to convince the reader of their own – formerly disregarded – point of view.

such as his insignia, which marked an occasion as a public event.[7] Thus, the public sphere consisted of symbols and established codes. Content was fully defined by form; the crucial element of dispute and debate, as found in Greek society, was entirely missing. The emergence of international trade brought with it the need to acquire knowledge of recent events taking place in distant cities or countries. As these needs could not be answered through the existing public sphere, merchants began to exchange letters. At first, this had no influence on the public sphere, as the letters were not publicly accessible. However, as these developments occurred alongside the transformation of the state, the emblematic character of the 'representative' public sphere was reduced and thereby opened up new space: the state's new key responsibilities became stable bureaucracy, financial needs, and a standing army. The sphere of public authority came to be equated with power: "The state is the 'public authority.' It owes this attribute to its task of promoting the public or common welfare of its rightful members" (Habermas 2).[8]

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, the bourgeoisie also perceived public space as an empty signifier and further transformed it. Regardless of the minor modifications of the two realms throughout history, the most radical changes of the two spheres are said to have taken place at this stage (Ingram, Bouthillette, and Retter, "Placemaking" 297). Arendt equates this period of fundamental change with the rise of the social "from the shadowy interior of the household into the light of the public sphere" (38). She claims that "the social realm, which is neither private nor public, strictly speaking, is a relatively new phenomenon whose origin coincided with the emergence of the modern age and which found its political form in the nation-state" (28).[9] Focusing his study on the situation in France, England and Germany during the eighteenth and nineteenth century, Habermas embeds the structural transformation of the public sphere in the transformation of the state and its economy. The subsequent loss of a clear-cut dividing line, described by both critics, is criticised by Arendt at a later stage in her book. She believes that this

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7 This paragraph is based on the historical facts presented by Habermas in the first chapter of his study of the bourgeois public sphere, "Introduction: Preliminary Demarcation of a Type of Bourgeois Public Sphere" (1–26).

8 The tension between power and authority will be further investigated with regard to Friel's oeuvre in Chapter IV. In this context, the aspects of power and authority will also be linked with Foucault's work, e.g. his book *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* and his interview with Fontana and Pasquino published under the title "Truth and Power."

9 At a later stage in her study, Arendt clarifies that, whereas the political and the social realm had been two clearly distinct realms corresponding to the public and the private realm in antiquity, both sets came to be mingled in the modern world. Arendt very poetically writes that the two realms, that is the political and the social, indeed "constantly flow into each other like waves in the never-resting stream of the life process itself" (33).

development "has not only blurred the old borderline between private and political, it has also changed almost beyond recognition the meaning of the two terms and their significance for the life of the individual and the citizen" (38). What predominantly concerns Arendt is the extent to which the social undermined and diminished the private realm causing the latter to lose much of its sense of shelter, protection and security. As a result of this, issues deemed private before were suddenly discussed in public (40–49).[10]

In fact, a new public sphere developed within the private realm that was distinctive from public authority but believed to be significant for the entire society. Disregarding the unease and disapproval of public authority, the emerging bourgeois society – conceived as a group of private people who met in salons or private circles forming a public society – began to reflect on or even question actions, orders and laws issued by public authority. While the merchants had started to exchange letters to share knowledge, these people aimed at a common response, the public opinion, by discussing key issues of contemporary society. A civil society thus established itself alongside public authority and the bourgeoisie's economic activities and political dependencies, which had up to this point been of private interest, increasingly gained public recognition and relevance (Habermas 14–26).

In order to show the new distribution of power in relation to state and society, Habermas proposes a diagram that graphically represents the distinction between the public and the private sphere in the eighteenth century (30):

Private Realm		Sphere of Public Authority
Civil society (realm of commodity exchange and social labor)	Public sphere in the political realm	State (realm of the 'police')
	Public sphere in the world of letters (clubs, press)	
Conjugal family's internal space (bourgeois intellectuals)	(market of culture products) 'Town'	Court (courtly-noble society)

[10] In his study of the French situation, Prost indicates that the change of situation that Arendt is so concerned about really only applies to a minority in society, as "the possibility of having a private life was a class privilege limited to those who lived, often on private incomes, in relatively sumptuous splendour. Those who worked for a living inevitably experienced some intermingling of public and private life" (7). Thus, only "[in] upper class homes [was] there […] a marked difference between rooms designated for receiving guests and other parts of the house or apartment. Public rooms were for display, for whatever was deemed 'presentable'; everything that should be shielded from indiscreet eyes was banished" (4). As the history of the concept of *home* as well as the discussion of O'Casey's Dublin trilogy will show, the lives of poor people often took place in one single room where public and private aspects were intertwined in a rather complex manner.

Public authority, as illustrated in this diagram, is disconnected from the domains to which society has access. While the public sphere in the political realm is integrated into the private realm, it remained separated from bourgeois society and each family's privacy or intimacy. The public sphere of civil society is, however, based on a paradox: the principle of universal access, which is nonetheless available only to the bourgeoisie. People who belong neither to public authority nor to bourgeois society remain excluded from both forms of the public sphere. While they are ruled by authority, they are silently (ab)used by the bourgeoisie, who try to strengthen their arguments by claiming to represent public opinion. Public opinion, however, defined as a point of view shared by the majority of the people is shown to be a chimera. Nevertheless, what was looked upon as public opinion in the eighteenth century quickly became an instrument of power for the bourgeoisie, fundamentally changing the power structures and the distribution of power within the state. Using clubs and literary circles to form public opinion effectively allowed the bourgeoisie to control public authority, which until then had held a monopoly on power.[11]

Apart from witnessing economic changes, which through political debates led to the emergence of a new public sphere, the eighteenth century is also characterised by a growing interest in psychology. These shifts in interest indicate that the location of the new public sphere within the private realm had far-reaching consequences; the private sphere was likewise transformed. Two different realms were established: one realm which was more easily accessible and another realm which was extremely intimate and personal and to which access was exclusive or barred (Habermas 45 – 46). Prost highlights that as long as all members of a household had inhabited the same room, intimacy had been "an almost meaningless notion" (63). Once intimacy came to be associated with privacy and with the veiled, hidden sphere within the private realm, however, it moved to the centre of people's concerns. In fact, a profound interest in the zones of intimacy and privacy was aroused.

In his study *The Fall of Public Man*, Sennett equates this new understanding of intimacy with "warmth, trust and open expression of feelings" (5). Whereas

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[11] In a number of Anglo-Irish texts, the public and the private spheres will be even further intertwined. In O'Casey's plays, for instance, the public sphere repeatedly invades the family's internal space, while characters like Molly Bloom in Joyce's *Ulysses* or Friel's Grace and Frank Hardy in *Faith Healer* as well as the three protagonists in *Molly Sweeney* willingly share their inner life and thoughts with the reader or the audience and bury the private sphere at the expense of the triumphant public sphere. Therefore, while the characters are shown to be incapable of communicating or disclosing their private truths – their thoughts, woes or sorrows – amongst each other, on a narratological and dramatic level, nothing, in these instances, remains hidden which cannot be articulated in public.

Sennett's statement refers to a space that is either physical or mental, Arendt takes this idea even further and introduces an exclusively mental space of intimacy indicating that the advent of psychology also led to an interiorised notion of the private. She puts forward a very interesting interpretation suggesting that people's partial loss of the private realm as an exclusive and personal sphere, which had formerly provided them with a certain degree of shelter and protection, resulted in "a flight from the whole outer world into the inner subjectivity of the individual" (69).[12] Sennett further hints at the enormous hopes and expectations people had as they turned their attention towards their inner life and subjectivity:

> The advent of modern psychology, and of psychoanalysis in particular, was founded on the faith that in understanding the inner workings of the self *sui generis*, without transcendental ideas of evil or of sin, people might free themselves from these horrors and be liberated to participate more fully and rationally in a life outside the boundaries of their own desires. (5; original emphasis)

Thus, emotions and feelings, apart from political topics, played a crucial role in the new cultural institutions such as salons or literary circles; Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* and *Clarissa*, for instance, serve as prime examples of how literature became interiorised.

Lehnert approaches this very same transformation of the private realm from a slightly different angle. She also acknowledges the growing interest in psychology and subjectivity and agrees that an interest in other people's feelings, moods, thoughts and selfhood evolved at the time. However, parallel to this, she detects a certain tendency to publicise the private which originated in the above-mentioned interiorisation of the individual. She argues that due to industrialisation and the standardisation of jobs which appeared to threaten the singularity of the individual, people soon began to feel an urge to imagine, create and even fictionalise their own private realm, which was otherwise inaccessible to anyone else (19–49).

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Freud's psychoanalysis came to offer a language which allowed people to express their most intimate thoughts which up to this point had remained unvoiced or unexpressed simply because people had lacked the vocabulary to articulate their emotions (Lehnert 13).[13]

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[12] Arendt does not fail to point out that it is really only in the twentieth century that it has been discovered "how rich and manifold the realm of the hidden can be under the conditions of intimacy" (72).

[13] Psychoanalysis is the necessary precondition for Bachelard's phenomenological approach to space. In his work *The Poetics of Space*, which is based on radical empiricism, Bachelard argues that psychoanalysis produces the subtext to poetic images, and, through the power of imagination, he claims to be able to offer a systematic psychological analysis of one's inner

Thus, intimacy paradoxically started to be shared even more extensively amongst the public – the readers, the theatregoers or the listeners of a conversation. Nevertheless, by publicly sharing intimacy or privacy and by self-dramatising one's private life, the unique aspect of the experience was partly lost. Moreover, the intimate and the public sphere became as intertwined as fiction and reality, a tendency which has continued ever since. Habermas even claims that the public sphere has become "the sphere for the publicizing of private biographies" (171), while Sennett concludes that people's immense concern "with their single life-histories and particular emotions as never before" in order to free themselves from evil as well as from their own desires by staging and studying the intimate in great detail has "proved to be a trap rather than a liberation" (5).

For large parts of contemporary society, the phenomenon of enacting one's private space in public still has a dramatic function:

> Nearly without exception, our private spaces seem to have mutated into more or less public stages. Never have people felt a stronger need to make their inner life public. It appears that anything can be said or shown, no matter where nor when. (Lehnert 17, my translation)[14]

Everyday life, then, often consists of staging one's experiences and intimate actions in public. Lehnert recognises an increasing drive toward or thrill at the transgression of the boundary between the spheres and the production of intimacy in public. The collapse of the distinction between public and private domains contributes to the impression that, by sharing intimacy, feelings of loneliness or isolation might be overcome: "The private sphere has mutated into a public space, which is always accessible to anyone and where no one is alone – or, at least, where one can indulge in the idea of not being alone" (101, my translation).[15] This argument is very much in line with Arendt, who

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spaces. Drawing a parallel between one's house and soul, he tries to explain the meaning of the concept of *house*. Bachelard regards the *home* as the private space of one's thoughts, memories and past. Referring to Jung's concept of *unconsciousness* he believes that one's inner life is structured like a house consisting of several floors. Examining "the topography of our intimate being" – the deepest and happiest realms being those of childhood – hidden or seemingly vanished rooms are transformed into realms of an unforgettable past (xxxvi). *Home*, connected with shelter, security and consolation, protects the intimate self from the dangers of public life and from the outside world.

14 Original: Unsere privaten Räume scheinen fast ausnahmslos zu mehr oder weniger öffentlichen Bühnen mutiert zu sein. Niemals zuvor haben Menschen ihr Innerstes so konsequent nach aussen gekehrt. Alles scheint jederzeit und überall sagbar und zeigbar zu sein (17).

15 Original: Die Privatsphäre mutiert zum öffentlichen Ort, zu dem immer alle Zugang haben und wo niemand allein sein muss – oder sich doch wenigstens [jeder] der Illusion hingeben kann, nicht allein zu sein (101).

emphasises that "everything that appears in public can be seen and heard by everybody and has the widest possible publicity" (50).

These considerations lead directly to Benn and Gaus' sociological approach. Their study *Public and Private in Social Life* offers additional insight into the *public* and the *private* dimension, as the authors focus on the "conceptual framework that organises action in a social environment" (5). Privateness and publicness are said to influence one another as the definitions of both terms are governed by three features: *access*, *agency* and *interest* (7).[16] The first feature, *access*, is closely related to power and "can be further divided into four sub-dimensions: *physical* access to spaces, access to *activities and intercourse*, access to *information* and access to *resources*" (7, original emphasis). Publicness means granting access to anyone and everyone. By contrast, as soon as groups or individuals have the right to decide whether to allow or deny someone entry to a room, participation in a discussion, or access to information, the situation takes on a private character:

> A concern for one's privacy is typically a concern to be able to control the dissemination of information about oneself: to insist that a certain piece of information is private is not necessarily to assert that no one but oneself should have access to it, but rather that the access should be under one's own control. [...] Information that is made public is available to the public at large or to any interested member of the public. Our 'public face' is thus that which we allow anyone to see, our 'private side' is that to which we restrict access. But although we often contrast 'publicity' with 'privacy' in this way, the former is at least as often opposed to 'secrecy.' (8)

In this sense, the degree of access available to one's private realm also describes the degree of confidence and trust in the person who is granted access. Although sharing information with someone else does not normally mean making the information public, the people involved might not have the same perception of how private the shared information is. This explains why the definition of *public* and *private* always needs to remain an individual issue. The statement that secrecy is the opposite of publicity confirms the idea that space can be a mental concept and need not always be physical; it is possible to live in

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[16] Following Benn and Gaus, I have chosen to use the rare and unusual words *publicness* and *privateness* because they have a much wider meaning than *publicity* or *privacy*. According to *The Oxford English Dictionary*, *publicness* is defined as "[t]he quality or character of being public, in various senses; publicity, notoriety, openness; the fact of pertaining to or affecting the community as a whole; devotedness to the public interest; the condition of being commonly accepted, prevalence" (783). *Privateness*, on the other hand, is referred to by the dictionary as "[t]he quality or condition of being private, in various senses; privacy, the opposite of publicity; withdrawal from society, seclusion; secrecy; the pursuit of private ends; the quality of being a private person or of living privately; confidential intercourse, intimacy" (520).

a world of dreams no one else knows or is aware of.[17] The second feature, the *agent*, is the person who dispenses and controls access: "The basic distinction is between an agent acting privately, i. e. on his own account, or publicly, i. e. as an officer of the city, community, commonwealth, state etc." (9). An agent might have to act differently depending on whether he or she is talking to someone in a private or public function. *Interest* is the third and last feature to influence the public or private nature of a space, place, resource or situation and "is concerned with the status of the people who will be better or worse off for whatever is in question" (10). This aspect addresses the following questions: Who benefits from having access? Is there some public or private interest to be considered? The tension between what is thought of as being of individual and collective interest is largely based on ideology.

For my purposes, I understand the meanings of *public* and *private* to go far beyond the dimension of space. These categories form people's identity and organise their behaviour or discourse with others. Rather than denoting spatial entities, the terms describe mental categories. What one perceives as *public* or *private* remains largely individual. I believe that public and private spaces rarely stand in complete opposition to one another; in fact, more often they are a matter of degree. Thus, I agree with Benn and Gaus, who suggest that the two terms "constitute a continuum, along which particular instances can be ordered, ranging from the more public to the more private" (13). Whether knowledge is made public or is kept private is primarily a question of power. Whatever is public is associated with the dimension of reality as it is available to all. The existence of the public is, therefore, never questioned. The private realm, on the other hand, is hidden, veiled and susceptible to criticism. It is linked to intimacy, confidential discourse, ideas of *home*, shelter and protection of individuality, an atmosphere of cosiness as well as a sense of belonging. As a space which is strongly associated with the concept of the *other*, its existence is often ignored, silenced or feared by those who rule the public sphere. Indeed, the private realm is often concerned with the evasion of power structures and closely related to imagination as mental space cannot be restricted. One can go as far as one's imagination allows in order to find freedom or protection from the outside, the public world.

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[17] Talking of the production of mental spaces as a result of one's personal experiences, Harvey argues that "[w]e do recognise, of course, that our subjective experience can take us into realms of perception, imagination, fiction and fantasy, which produce mental spaces and maps as so many mirages of the supposedly 'real' thing" (203).

III. The Significance of Space and Representations of the Irish in Anglo-Irish Literature

Ireland's long history of colonialism and the frequent heteronomous images drawn of the Irish population by the occupying power have led to a preoccupation of Anglo-Irish literature with both space and – as a recurrent postcolonial message from the periphery to the centre – the representation of the Irish people.

As the power over one's space or land is closely associated with the feeling of safety and shelter, control over space or the possession of a place have been regarded as basic human needs. People thus gain a sense of belonging from a place of their own, from their own *home*:

> If places are indeed a fundamental aspect of man's existence in the world, if they are sources of security and identity for individuals and for groups of people, then it is important that the means of experiencing, creating and maintaining significant places is not lost. (Relph 6)

Indirectly, this statement hints at the far-reaching consequences people are faced with when they are deprived of their own space or when they lose control over it. Two possible outcomes of dispossession or displacement are a lack of homeliness and a deep sense of alienation from one's own land and culture. Consequently, much of postcolonial writing deals with the *re*gaining of power or control, both physically and linguistically, over cultural space and actual places that have previously been lost. Emphasising the fundamental role language plays in this process of reclaiming space and creating a "reality of place," Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin argue that

> [p]lace therefore, the 'place' of the 'subject', throws light upon subjectivity itself, because whereas we might conceive subjectivity as a process, as Lacan has done, so the discourse of place is a process of a continual dialectic between subject and object. Thus a major feature of post-colonial literatures is the concern with either developing or recovering an appropriate identifying relationship between self and place because it is precisely within the parameters of place and its separateness that the process of subjectivity can be conducted. (Introduction 392)

In Anglo-Irish literature space and especially the possession of land have always been central issues. The repeated process of (re)claiming land and space in Anglo-Irish literature marks the colonised people's continual attempt at self-definition and their resistance to total disempowerment. After all, "[t]he question of the subject and subjectivity directly affects colonized peoples' perceptions of their identities and their capacities to resist the conditions of

their domination, their 'subjection'" (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, *Key Concepts* 219). Stressing the strong relationship between *self* and *place*, Wally claims that "[…] place, or rather the notion of space, is a cornerstone in the subject's identity. The vital role of space in the construction of identity can be related to general psychological constants" (141). Thus, Anglo-Irish writers often deal with general questions of representation, identity and space. According to Foster, many Irish writers "tend to have almost totemic relations with one or two places" (31). Not surprisingly, then, a large number of narratives and poems are deeply rooted in specific Irish regions, with particular villages or cities playing an important role. Jeffares was among the first critics to recognise this crucial position of place: "I am inclined to believe that, as critics, we have paid too little attention to the importance of place in Anglo-Irish writing […]" (11). While Jeffares, however, concentrated exclusively on how landscape was treated in Anglo-Irish literature, I want to suggest that the significance of space has not yet been investigated to the full. In particular, the relationship of space and the representations of the Irish people has not been sufficiently explored. Although this study of the interrelation between space and images drawn of the Irish population in Anglo-Irish writing must remain selective in its nature, I will introduce some of the more prominent representations chosen by Anglo-Irish writers. In a second step, these texts will be compared to Brian Friel's plays in order to indicate how, and to what extent, they differ from each other.

According to Wally, the obsession with space in Anglo-Irish literature is grounded in historical and cultural developments:

> This preoccupation with place stems from a recurring incidence of violent expropriation which affected all classes throughout Irish history. Hence, Irish people are possessed by place because large sections of Irish society either never possessed any, or, if they did, had to relate their possession to colonial force and injustice. However, relating this preoccupation with place exclusively to Irish history would constitute an oversimplification of this highly intricate issue. (141)

From a historical point of view, it has thus been argued that the Penal Laws imposed on the Irish population after the English conquest of the country deprived the Irish of their land and had a long-lasting psychological effect on the country (Carpenter, Deane and McCormack 874). Culturally, as will be shown, the Irish were faced with the stereotypical rendering of their character in English literature for many decades. This one-sided portrayal led to harsh reactions among Anglo-Irish writers, who strongly disapproved of the representation of the stage-Irishman and denounced this image as a complete *mis*representation of their people. Sensing that it would be "less easy to decolonize the mind than the territory," authors such as Carleton, Synge and

O'Casey aimed at offering authentic and truthful descriptions of Irishness or Irish socio-political situations (Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland* 6). Defining themselves against the English, they stressed their Gaelic culture, focused on their own mythological background and emphasised the Irish setting in their texts. They invented their own myths or showed reality as it was perceived from their point of view. Of course, they could not avoid inventing stereotypes themselves. Still, the attempt to create a more accurate and complex rendering of a nation's characteristics, although such an approach necessarily remains oversimplifying and distorting, inevitably requires inside knowledge. As a consequence, the Anglo-Irish writers, in many different ways, began to share with their readers private or even intimate information concerning the lives or thoughts of their characters. Thus, the issues of space as well as publicness and privateness have been at the core of Anglo-Irish writing for a long time, and no sphere in Anglo-Irish literature has remained taboo, as the Anglo-Irish authors have tended to turn the most private and intimate experiences into public knowledge.

1. Laws, Landlords and Irish Bulls: Historical Developments and Cultural Implications

Although land of the Irish was confiscated as early as the Norman invasion in the twelfth century, the earliest textual evidence I will concentrate on stems from the seventeenth century. At this stage, Ireland became a place of rebellion and stopped being the remote colony of little interest to the English colonising power (Palmer 8). Nationhood and inhabitants were suddenly brought into focus.

In his essay "A Discovery of the True Causes Why Ireland was Never Entirely Subdued and Brought under Obedience of the Crown of England until the Beginning of His Majesty's Happy Reign" (1612), Sir John Davies, attorney general in Ireland between 1603 and 1619, declared the "ultimate goal of colonialism [...] to be such a thoroughgoing political and cultural assimilation of the Irish" that – except for the geographical distance between England and Ireland – the two countries should melt into one (Fogarty 158). However, Davies identified the Irish law system, the so-called Brehon Laws, as the main factor that prevented the final subjugation of the Irish people and concluded that their laws "made the land waste" and "the people idle" instead of transforming them into valid, hard-working British subjects (218).[1] The

[1] Brehon is the anglicised version of the Irish word *breitheamh*, 'judge' ("Law in Gaelic Ireland" 301). The Brehon laws were based on Celtic institutions and covered "a wide variety of topics

image of people's idleness remained one of the most persistent stereotypes of the Irish for many decades.

The arrival of Oliver Cromwell, whose campaign in Ireland lasted from August 1649 until May 1650, marked the translation of Davies' theory into violent practice and has been described as "perhaps the greatest exercise in ethnic cleansing in early modern Europe" (Morrill quoted by Wormald 239). Cromwell, however, "projected himself as a providential liberator from Irish barbarism, royalist misrule, and Catholic hypocrisy" (Connolly and Morgan 127). Believing that "a prerequisite in any effort to carry out a successful conquest in Ireland was to undermine the native culture," the English began to abolish all Brehon Laws and introduced their own legal system instead (Ó Tuama 28). In order to disenfranchise and repress the Catholic clergy and population of Ireland, as well as to favour the Protestants, the Penal Laws were enacted during the fifteen years following the Battle of the Boyne in 1690. These discriminating laws "had been designed (according to one school of thought) to keep Catholics poor and (according to another) to make them Protestants" (Bartlett 50). The laws were thus intended to deprive all Catholics of civic life, to exclude them from education, to leave them in ignorance, and finally, to prevent them from owning land. Catholics were not allowed to attend Catholic church service, nor to educate their own children. Therefore, the Penal Laws are believed to have harmed and victimised all Catholics, although their introduction was primarily a manifestation of English rule designed to banish the Catholic clergy. By 1703, only fourteen per cent of Irish

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such as contracts, surety, theft, injury, marriage, kinship, insanity, legal procedure, and so on" (300). Old Irish law, as opposed to English law, greatly emphasised the role of kinship. Nowadays, it is considered to have been rather modern among European standards. Having studied the Irish law system, Davies, however, concludes that "if we consider the Irish customs, we shall find that the people which doth use them must of necessity be rebels to all good government, destroy the commonwealth wherein they live, and bring barbarism and desolation upon the richest and most fruitful land of the world" (216). Unlike the law in England where "murder, manslaughter, rape, robbery, and theft are punished with death" (216), in Ireland such offences were met with a fine. However, the aspects of the Brehon laws which Davies was most amazed by were the practices of *tanistry*, *gavelkind* and *fostering*. According to English law at the time, the eldest son inherited his father's estates. The Irish custom of tanistry described the "ancient custom of choosing an heir apparent of a Celtic chieftain" and thereby attempting to elect the most valid person for the job (footnote by Canny and Carpenter, 217). The Irish custom of gavelkind, also known as partible inheritance, referred to the division of land among the legitimate and illegitimate sons of the dead. Davies was convinced that this practice "needs in the end make a poor gentility" (217). However, he was surprised that these people were "so affected unto their small portions of land as they rather chose to live at home by theft, extortion, and coshering than seek any better fortunes abroad" (218). Although it was normally the parents' responsibility to rear and educate their children, the Brehon law also knew the option of fostering whereby the children were entrusted in the care of foster-parents – a custom regarded as beneficial for both sides.

land remained in Catholic hands. With the "Act to Prevent the Further Growth of Popery" in 1704, this number dropped even further. This law said that an heir to a Catholic clergyman could not inherit any land unless he was a Protestant at the time of the clergyman's death. According to the "oath of adjuration," the heir was, moreover, expected to declare his Protestant faith and abjure the Pope and "the adoration or invocation of the Virgin Mary, or any other saint, and the sacrifice of the mass" because these were "superstitious and idolatrous" ("The Penal Laws" 876). Finally, the heir was asked to completely subjugate himself to English power and the crown. Regardless of the fact that these harsh laws were declared void towards the end of the eighteenth century, the suffering which they caused as well as the psychological impact which they had on the Irish population and Irish thinking are thought to have been enormous (Carpenter, Deane and McCormack 874).

Early evidence of the suffering of the native population is provided by a number of poems written in the Irish language in the seventeenth century.[2] Shortly after the conquest, Irish poetry developed into a private space to which only the Irish population had access. Knowing that the occupiers neither understood, nor spoke Irish and would, therefore, be excluded from this discourse, the authors, as Kiberd indicates, wrote openly and critically, using their language as a weapon to voice the injustices they suffered:

> Words have always been the last weapons of the disarmed, and the elaboration of a compensating inner world of fantasy is a feature of the psychology of most colonized and even post-colonial peoples. [...] In countryside overrun by foreign armies, lying to officials could be seen as a highly moral activity, which could save a family or even a whole townland from ruin. The Irishman's reputation for deceit, guile, and wordplay is not only the result of the distrust nursed among natives of all colonizers; it is also the logical outcome of a life of political oppression. ("Irish Literature" 280)

As early as the seventeenth century, the occupied people thus discovered an alternative space where they could utter their thoughts freely and did not have to lie in order to hide their personal truth. Being aware that the enemies described in their poems were barred from this space, they did not even bother to change these people's names. The poets' laments must be regarded as an early postcolonial voice presenting an alternative view, namely the view of the dispossessed and repressed, or, in postcolonial terms, the voice of the *other*.[3]

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2 The poems are collected in an anthology referred to as *An Duanaire 1600–1900: Poems of the Dispossessed*, edited by Seán Ó Tuama and Thomas Kinsella, the latter of whom also translated the poems into English.

3 In the colonial Irish context, the English colonisers – who were in power of the dominant discourse – came to be represented as the self, whereas the concept of the *other* was applied to the colonised Irish people. In his essay "Literature in Irish; c.1550–1690: From the Elizabethan Settlement to the Battle of the Boyne," Mac Craith, moreover, stresses that,

Albeit being excluded from Irish literature and the issues tackled in the private realm of the poems, the English colonisers sensed that these Gaelic bards were to be judged "as a particular obstacle" in their attempt to subdue the Irish "not just because they epitomized a cultural tradition" which they hoped to abolish, but also because of the social position and political influence they exercised over the Irish population (Kiberd, "Irish Literature" 281).

In his poem "Exodus to Connacht," Fear Dorcha Ó Mealláin describes the misery and grief he and his people had to endure when in 1653–54, even before the introduction of the Penal Laws, all Catholics of higher rank were, under threat of their lives, forced to leave their homes and resettle in Connacht.[4] The poet identifies the Catholic faith – ironically, the motive for expelling the Irish from their land – as the only possession which could not be taken away from them:

Mícheál feartach ár gcuid stóir,
  Muire Ógh 's an dá aspal déag,
Brighid, Pádraig agus Eoin –
  is maith an lón creideamh Dé.

Colam Cille feartach caomh,
  's Colmán mhac Aoidh, ceann na gcliar,
beid linn uile ar aon tslí
  's ná bígí ag caoi fá dhul siar.

Nach dtuigeann sibh, a bhráithre gaoil
  cúrsaí an tsaoil le fada buan?
gé mór atá 'nár seilbh,
  beag bheas linn ag dul san uaigh.

Our sole possessions: Michael of miracles,
  the virgin Mary, the twelve apostles,
Brigid, Patrick and Saint John
  – and fine rations: faith in God.

apart from their different geographical, linguistic and cultural background, the colonised people's adherence to Catholicism was another aspect which became associated with the *other*. The "symbiosis of Gaelic and Catholic with its counterpoint of English and Protestant was […] a vital factor in defining Irish identity throughout the seventeenth century" (219). Mac Craith wraps up his argument by saying: "It is hardly an exaggeration to claim that perhaps the most enduring legacy [of the Gaelic literati] was the forging of an Irish identity that equated Irishness with Catholicism" (224).

4 As the people had to travel west during wintertime, hundreds of them are reported to have died on the journey (Ó Tuama and Kinsella 103). The phrase 'To hell or to Connacht,' which the Irish who were expelled from their land began to use at that time, refers to their choice between death in their native land or life in misery in the west of Ireland, where the land was less fertile.

Sweet Colm Cille of miracles too,
and Colmán Mac Aoidh, poets' patron,
will all be with us on our way.
Do not bewail our journey West.

Brothers mine, do you not see
the ways of the world a while now?
However much we may possess
we'll go with little into the grave.

(104–105, l.5–16)

Apart from the firm belief in God, there is a strong sense of community and brotherhood expressed in these stanzas. Those addressed by the speaker in his native tongue, Irish, represent the inner circle of his friends with whom he wishes to share his fear and anguish. The English, on the other hand, he manages to linguistically exclude from this sphere. He then draws a parallel to the people of Israel, who, according to the Bible, had to leave their country for Egypt and were protected by the same God who would now accompany them westward. In the last stanza, returning to the Irish situation, he expresses his sorrow over the loss of home rule and control:

A Dhia atá fial, a thriath na mbeannachta,
féach na Gaeil go léir gan bharanta;
má táimid ag triall siar go Connachta,
fágmaid 'nár ndiaidh fó chian ar seanchairde.

God Who art generous, O Prince of Blessings,
behold the Gael, stripped of authority.
Now as we journey Westward into Connacht
old friends we'll leave behind us in their grief.

(108–109, l.49–52)

The poet is much distressed that, by going into exile, he and his people are forced to abandon the old friends who share their misery. This underlines how closely feelings of dispossession and the deprivation of land are related to loss of community and one's sense of belonging.

The two poems "Valentine Browne" and "No Help I'll Call," both written in the 1720s, illustrate Aogán Ó Rathaille's attempt and failure to regain his land from the new landowner Browne, land which was confiscated in 1690 after the Battle of the Boyne. The poet emphasises the pain he has suffered "since the alien devils entered the land of Conn" (161, l.2). He bewails his fate and complains that "[o]ur land, our shelter, our woods and our level ways / are pawned for a penny by a crew from the land of Dover" (165, l.7–8). The

depressing tone of the second poem points to the speaker's disillusionment with the new order and landlords. It also illustrates how much he regrets that the past system was lost and the former landlords have been displaced:

> Fán dtromlot d'imigh ar chine na rí mórga
> treabhann om uiseannaibh uisce go scímghlórach;
> is lonnmhar chuirid mo shrutha-sa foinseoga
> san abhainn do shileas ó Thruipill go caoin-Eochaill.
>
> Stadfadsa feasta – is gar dom éag gan mhoill
> ó treascradh dragain Leamhan, Léin is Laoi;
> rachad 'na bhfasc le searc na laoch don chill,
> na flatha fá raibh mo shean roimh éag do Chríost.
>
> Our proud royal line is wrecked; on that account
> the water ploughs in grief down from my temples,
> sources sending their streams out angrily
> to the river that flows from Truipeall to pleasant Eochaill.
>
> I will stop now – my death is hurrying near
> now the dragons of the Leamhan, Loch Léin and the
> Laoi are destroyed.
> In the grave with this cherished chief I'll join those kings
> my people served before the death of Christ.
>
> (166–167, l.21–28)

With the help of an agricultural metaphor, the poet describes how the tears run down his face and channel into his flesh like water into soil. He presents his tears – and metonymically his entire body – as the source of several Irish rivers and thus symbolically states his natural bond to the region. This practice reinforces the impression that he cannot possibly endure to be separated from his native soil. Alienated and inconsolable, the poet foreshadows his death in the last stanza, but seems convinced that once buried he will not only be reunited with the land but also spiritually connected with the ancient heroes of the past.

Fear Dorcha Ó Mealláin and Aogán Ó Rathaille's poems primarily centre round the loss of land. In the poem "Keep Fast Under Cover, O Stones – On the Death of James Dawson" by Seán Clárach Mac Dónaill (1691–1754), however, the landlord's treatment of the occupied Irish is criticised in an outspoken and blunt manner, which remains unique in this poetry collection. The landlord's cold-blooded, merciless personality is unmasked when the poet reveals: "Famine he fastened on the people to keep them in thrall" (173, l.8). In fact, Dawson often answered his tenants' begging for food by using violence and beating these men up (l.12). Thus, hunger and killing are identified as consciously applied means of keeping the natives under control and dominion.

Referring to the late landlord as "this grey-haired Dawson, a bloody and treacherous butcher" (l.2) and "a ravenous dog" (175, l.22), the speaker further underlines his deep-rooted hatred of this man. The description of the landlord's unparalleled brutality – he was "*ravaging* and *hanging* and *mangling* the poor for ever" (173, l.4, my emphasis) – indicates the degree of his violence as well as the degrading attitude towards his tenants. Moreover, the poet's choice of verbs to describe the landlord's actions recalls his metaphors of Dawson as a "butcher" and a "dog" behaving in a most cruel, and – in the case of "mangling" – even inhuman, animalistic way. After the death of the detested figure, the poet beseeches the stones to keep Dawson imprisoned "in closet of clay" forever (l.1). Imprisoned by the gravestone, the poet feels that the landlord, this shameless "bloodhound" (175, l.15) and "monster" (l.33), will be exposed to the forces of nature and finally punished for all his deeds. The stone will hopefully "grind his snarl and his yellow gums" (177, l.37) and his "carcass be picked by hungry and busy maggots" (l.43) leaving Dawson as powerless and defenceless as his tenants were under his reign. Addressing his former master directly, the poet expresses his hope that Dawson will be barred from afterlife for good and that "he or his like may never appear again" (l.40):

> Ba mhór do rachmas seal sa tsaolsa beo,
> ba chruaidh do bhreath ar lagaibh bhíodh gan treoir;
> is buan an t-acht do ceapadh thíos fád chomhair –
> fuacht is tart is teas is tinte 'od dhó.
>
> […]
>
> Brúigh, a leac, a dhraid 's a dhrandal crón,
> a shúile, a phlait, a theanga, a tholl dubh mór,
> gach lúith, gach alt, go prap den chamshliteoir,
> mar shúil ná casfaidh tar ais ná a shamhailt go deo.
>
> Cé go rabhais-se mustarach iomarcach santach riamh,
> biaidh do chiste 'ge cimire gann id dhiaidh,
> do cholann ag cruimhe dá piocadh go hamplach dian
> is t'anam ag fiuchadh sa gcoire gan contas blian.

> Great were your riches once, when you were alive,
> and cruel your doom on the weak and leaderless,
> but a steadfast statute was passed for you below:
> cold and thirst and heat and burning fires!
>
> […]
>
> O gravestone, grind his snarl and his yellow gums,
> his eyes and skull and tongue and great black hole,
> all joints and sinews (and quick!) of this hump of slime
> that he or his like may never appear again.

> Though arrogant ever, disdainful and avaricious,
> your fortune will fall to a miser after you,
> your carcass be picked by hungry and busy maggots,
> and your soul boil for years without number in the Great Pot.
>
> (174–175, l.25–28 and 176–177, l.37–44)

If the strong Catholic background of the Irish and the period the poem was written in is taken into consideration, the poet's condemnation of this landlord for whom there should be no redemption is even more remarkable.

However, not only English but also Irish landlords were often alienated from the local population; in spite of owning land in Ireland, Irish landlords who spent most of their time and money in England were known as Irish absentees. In her novels *Castle Rackrent* (1800) and *The Absentee* (1812), Maria Edgeworth expresses concern over the status quo on behalf of the Irish population. She criticises the landlords for recklessly exploiting their tenants and arbitrarily raising rents. Both novels are deeply rooted in their time and place. Ireland at the time was still a country of which the English knew little but against which they held countless prejudices. By cleverly introducing different levels of narration in *Castle Rackrent*, Edgeworth manages to reveal this bigotry. The implied author deliberately makes fun of the misconceptions held by the English and even exaggerates the descriptions of the Irish character. The landlords are presented in a particularly uncivilised manner, each of them representing a certain flaw. The existing stereotypes of the Irish are ridiculed by means of irony. As with *The Poems of the Dispossessed*, the message of Edgeworth's novel can be read as an early postcolonial statement, explaining the true problems of the country to the metropolis and centre of power.

In *Castle Rackrent*, the homodiegetic narrator Thady Quirk illustrates his masters' inability to deal with financial matters, their uncivilised behaviour and their exploitation of their tenants.[5] However, the old and "*honest*" Irish peasant, who has served five landlords during his life, does not intend to be disloyal. In fact, he has "out of friendship for the family, […] voluntarily undertaken to publish the Memoirs of the Rackrent Family […]" (*Castle Rackrent* 7, original emphasis). Incapable of lying, or rather too ignorant to do so, Thady informs the English reader that the detailed account of his masters' lives reveals nothing but the complete truth known to everyone in Ireland:

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[5] Rimmon-Kenan defines a 'homodiegetic' narrator as one who, "at least in some manifestations of 'his self'," participates in the story he tells (95).

> As for all I have here set down from memory and hearsay of the family, there's nothing but truth in it from beginning to end, that you [i. e. the reader] may depend upon, for where's the use of telling lies about the things which every body knows as well as I do? (96)[6]

In his innocent, naive, and open manner, Thady shows "the decline and the fall of a dynasty of Irish landlords of the mid-eighteenth century [...]" (Watson, *Rackrent* xv). His honesty and the absurd notion that unconditional loyalty to one's master is a servant's utmost duty prove to be a particularly clever textual device. The servant comes across as a simpleton who does not understand the possible implications of his revelations and does not see that he makes himself an object of ridicule. However, more importantly, this character can talk openly about the corruption and mismanagement of his different masters and thereby offer insight into a rotten system. His knowledge as an insider reveals elements of the system which the landlords want to hide and keep secret: "[...] the Rackrents – constantly in debt, in default of heir-male and given to dying young from hunting mishaps, drink and duels" (Burgess, "The National Tale" 47). As he presents the private and true side of landlordism in Ireland, Thady unveils his masters' stupidity, laziness and trickery. Corruption, alcoholism, and domestic violence are only some of the issues described in a thoroughly unconcerned manner. Nevertheless, despite his honesty, Thady's limited understanding and his complete confidence that his masters serve everyone's best interest make him an unreliable narrator. He fails to recognise that his story could never be the official version welcomed by his masters and that he harms his masters in spite of honouring the master-servant relationship more highly than any family bond.[7]

In addition to the narrator, a fictional editor was added to achieve yet another degree of distance between Thady and the implied author. The editor

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[6] Although Thady claims that it is in his nature always to be honest as well as "true and loyal" to the Rackrent family, the different personalities and views of his five masters – which he is always in full agreement with – require a certain adaptability of his value system and attitudes whenever a new master arrives at Castle Rackrent (8). Sir Kit's wife, Jessica, mocks Thady for this characteristic trait. But Thady appears unaware of her derision. He even boasts that had Kit's wife "meant to make any stay in Ireland, I stood a great chance of being a great favourite with her, for when she found I understood the *weather-cock*, she was always finding some pretence to be talking to me, and asking me which way the wind blew, and was it likely, did I think, to continue fair for England" (*Castle Rackrent* 36, my emphasis).

[7] Much to Thady's anger and disgrace, his son Jason, the only character in the text who shows financial capabilities, ends up being the master of Castle Rackrent at the time of Thady's story-telling.
If the significance of irony used in *Castle Rackrent* is taken into account, Thady's definite favouring of the master-servant relationship over any bonding between family members in Ireland could likewise be read as a particularly clever narratological device used by the implied author.

feels that "love of truth, which in some minds is innate and immutable, necessarily leads to a love of secret memoirs and private anecdotes" (*Castle Rackrent* 1). He compares the reader's prime interest in private matters with a theatre audience, where "we [i. e. the audience] anxiously beg to be admitted behind the scenes, that we may take a nearer view of the actors and actresses" (2). The reader of *Castle Rackrent* is thus allowed to see an unveiled, unmasked and private picture of Irish life, while the editor is protected from possible criticism thanks to his distance from Thady. The fictional editor, fully aware of the effect of Thady's frankness, however, admits that

> [t]hose who were acquainted with the manners of a certain class of the gentry of Ireland some years ago, will want no evidence of the truth of honest Thady's narrative: to those who are totally unacquainted with Ireland, the following Memoirs will perhaps be scarcely intelligible, or probably they may appear perfectly incredible. For the information of the *ignorant* English reader a few notes have been subjoined by the editor, and he had it once in contemplation to translate the language of Thady into plain English; but Thady's idiom is incapable of translation, and besides, the authenticity of his story would have been more exposed to doubt if it were not told in his own characteristic manner. (4, original emphasis)

The editor's ironic comment on his "contemplation to translate the language of Thady into plain English" hints at the great loss which a publicly accessible version of this intimate and faithful description, in other words, a minimisation of the events in order to reach a politically correct version for the public, would have suffered. In *Castle Rackrent*, the Irish dialect and point of view is, therefore, taken as the standard. As a result of this presentation, the editor suggests that, in order to understand the story and the Irish situation properly, the English reader needs a glossary.

Edgeworth's novel *The Absentee* also establishes a counter-position to a presumably official version of landlordism in Ireland. The text points towards various deficiencies in the country and identifies the absentees as the root of the problem. Count O'Halloran, one of the few Irish nobles presented in a favourable light, defines an absentee as a person who is away "from his home, his affairs, his duties, and his estate" and, at a later stage, he refers to such people as "enemies to Ireland" (*The Absentee* 51 and 117). Lady Clonbrony, the protagonist's mother, is a representative of these absentee figures. She repeatedly denies her own roots and her cultural heritage in order to be fully accepted by London society. Although the English ladies attend Lady Clonbrony's social events, they sneer at her behind her back for trying to imitate their British accent and for calling herself half-English. This mockery indicates that from an English point of view Lady Clonbrony could never pass as an English lady:

> 'If you knew all she endures, to look, speak, move, breathe, like an Englishwoman, you would pity her,' said lady Langdale.
> 'Yes, and you *cawnt* conceive the *peens* she *teekes* to talk of the *teebles* and *cheers* and to thank Q, and with so much *teeste* to speak pure English,' said Mrs Dareville.
> 'Pure cockney, you mean,' said lady Langdale.
> 'But does lady Clonbrony expect to pass for English?' said the duchess.
> 'O yes! Because she is not quite Irish *bred and born* – only bred, not born,' said Mrs Dareville. 'And she could not be five minutes in your grace's company before she would tell you that she was *Henglish*, born in *Hoxfordshire*.'
> 'She must be a vastly amusing personage – I should like to meet her, if one could see and hear her incog.,' said the duchess. (2, original emphasis)

The ladies' condescending comments about Lady Clonbrony and her affected speech illustrate that, as a nouveau-riche and as an Irish woman, she is a member of a group who will never be admitted to the inner and intimate circle of the English upper class:

> [...] lady St James contrived to mortify and to mark the difference between those with whom she was, and with whom she was not, upon terms of intimacy and equality. Thus the ancient grandees of Spain drew a line of demarcation between themselves and the newly created nobility. Whenever or wherever they met, they treated the new nobles with utmost respect, never addressed them but with all their titles, with low bows, and with all the appearance of being, with the most perfect consideration, any thing but their equals; whilst towards one another the grandees laid aside their state, and omitting their titles, it was 'Alcalá – Medina – Sidonia – Infantado,' and a freedom and familiarity which marked equality. Entrenched in etiquette in this manner, and mocked with marks of respect, it was impossible either to intrude or to complain of being excluded. (56)

Disgusted by this society after he has observed the subtle ways in which these ladies humiliate his mother, Lord Colambre, the main protagonist and Lady Clonbrony's son, decides to travel to his homeland to explore the true and hidden Ireland, where he spent his childhood. Initially, Lady Dashfort, an English lady living in Ireland, manages to portray the Irish in the worst light possible. She calls the native population "[b]arbarians" and adds, "are not we the civilized English, come to teach them manners and fashions?" (96) As soon as the protagonist succeeds in freeing himself from her influence, however, he attempts to discover the true character of the island. His new and noble friend Sir James Brooke tells him that indeed shortly after the flight of the landlords and their families rushing to London in high hopes to join the British upper class, "[n]ew faces and new equipages appeared: people, who had never been heard of before, started into notice, pushed themselves forward, not scrupling to elbow their way even at the castle" (80). However, this state of uncivilised behaviour by some of the native population did not last very long, in fact,

> some of the Irish nobility and gentry [...] were glad to return home to refit; and they brought with them a new stock of ideas, and some taste for science and literature, which, within these latter years, have become fashionable, indeed indispensable, in London. That part of the Irish aristocracy, who, immediately upon the first incursions of the vulgarians, had fled in despair to their fastnesses in the country, hearing of the improvements which had gradually taken place in society, and assured of the final expulsion of the barbarians, ventured from their retreats, and returned to their posts in town. So that now [...] you find a society in Dublin composed of a most agreeable and salutary mixture of birth and education, gentility and knowledge, manner and matter; and you see pervading the whole new life and energy, new talent, new ambition, a desire and a determination to improve and be improved – a perception that higher distinction can now be obtained in almost all company, by genius and merit, than by airs and address [...]. (80–81)

Apart from disagreeing with Lady Dashfort's image of the Irish as unrefined and primitive, Sir James Brooke's expression, they "returned to their posts in town," clearly indicates what he considers to be the true responsibility of the Irish landlords.

Disguised as Mr Evans, Lord Colambre visits his family's estates, which allows him to gain insight into the hidden truth of how the estates are run by his father's agents. During his journey, he meets all kinds of country people and listens to their worries. In fact, in the first village, called Colambre, the inhabitants praise his father's agent, Mr Burke, as a blessing for everyone. Lord Colambre learns that his father, or rather his father's intermediary, however, is strongly displeased with Mr Burke because the agent has "not ruined his tenantry, by forcing them to pay more than the land is worth" and because he has "not squeezed money from them, by fining down rents [...]" (129). At Clonbrony, his father's other estate, Lord Colambre is introduced to the greatly praised agent, Mr Nicholas Garraghty, who is quite the opposite of Mr Burke. The agent's corruption and his oppression of the tenants are sharply contrasted with the kind and simple hospitality which Lord Colambre encounters staying at the O'Neil family, his father's tenants. In Edgeworth's novel, it is the tenants' values and attitudes as well as their kind behaviour towards strangers and amongst each other which are presented as the true images of Irishness. As a result of his visits to the family's estates, Lord Colambre recognises that his parents in England unknowingly exploit the Irish tenants. By letting Lord Colambre develop a sense of responsibility for the tenants and a strong bond with the land and his native culture, the narrator suggests a remedy to this situation. Mr Nicholas Garraghty is made redundant, and Mr Burke is asked to run both estates. In *The Absentee*, the piece of private truth revealed to the reader suggests that Irish tenants have a right to landlords who fulfil their duties by taking care of Irish property in order to facilitate life within the country.

Edgeworth's criticism of the landowners is particularly remarkable because of her conclusion that the landlords and not the rest of the population were to blame for the difficult Irish situation and because this proto-postcolonial message from the Irish periphery was addressed to her former homeland, England. The private or hidden truth of Ireland is, as found in *Castle Rackrent* and *The Absentee*, that in many cases the power is in the hands of landlords or agents who neither understand nor care about their business, and run the country to the disadvantage of the Irish people. Yet, the political situation presented in her novels shortly before and after the Act of Union between Ireland and England was not the only source of criticism for Edgeworth. At the same time, she greatly disapproved of the highly stereotypical portrayal of the Irish, which had been established over the past centuries in English drama and was now taken for the plain truth by the 'culturally ignorant' English theatre audience. From the Irish standpoint, the stereotypical and humiliating representation of their character was a painful sign that the deprivation of their land had gone hand in hand with their losing the battle over language and self-definition.

The pivotal role given to the power over language both in colonial and postcolonial times has often been highlighted. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, for instance, identify "control over language" as "[o]ne of the main features of imperial oppression" because "[l]anguage becomes the medium through which a hierarchical structure of power is perpetuated, and the medium through which conceptions of 'truth', 'order' and 'reality' become established" (*The Empire* 7). Ngugi underlines this notion, arguing that

> [l]anguage carries culture, and culture carries [...] the entire body of values by which we come to perceive ourselves and our place in the world. How people perceive themselves affects how they look at their culture, at their politics and at the social production of wealth, at their entire relationship to nature and to other beings. Language is thus inseparable from ourselves as a community of human beings with a specific form and character, a specific history, a specific relationship to the world. (16)

Thus, for a colonised people, losing the struggle over language also means losing the power of shaping reality from 'within.' As the colonised stand for the *other*, the unfamiliar in the coloniser, the act of definition is often linked with being fundamentally misunderstood and misjudged. Ngugi also refers to this risk when he, indirectly, equates the denial or dismissal of one's language with that of a people's culture:

> Culture embodies those moral, ethical and aesthetic values, the set of spiritual eyeglasses, through which [people] come to view themselves and their place in the universe. Values are the basis of a people's identity, their sense of particularity as

> members of the human race. All this is carried by language. Language as culture is the collective memory bank of a people's experience in history. (14–15)

This power struggle over language and the shaping of public truth and reality has proved to be a particularly successful method of depriving a people of their own myth of identity or nation. For the Irish, this meant that the power to publicly define their own truth and identity was denied by the occupiers. Ireland was transformed into a fabrication, an invention by the English colonisers. A set of firm beliefs about the Irish *other* defined both land and people. Typically, the failure to acknowledge the language and culture gap – the metonymic gap – between the two countries is, according to Palmer, said to have added to the misrepresentation of the Irish culture and its people:

> Throughout the predominantly Irish-speaking island, the meeting of native and newcomer implied an inevitable linguistic corollary: hibernophone met anglophone. Yet the reality of that encounter with its inevitable verbal and gestural fumblings – the sign language, the pidgin phrases, the macaronics of the new speaker, the mispronunciations and misunderstandings, the staggered exchanges mediated by interpreters and their variously unreliable glosses, the whole drama of language in flux – is blacked out. English writers consistently erased the majority language, reducing Irish-language utterances to English paraphrases. (45)[8]

In her chapter "'A Bad Dream with no Sound': the Representation of Irish in the Texts of the Elizabethan Conquest," Palmer further argues that because the English occupiers had no command of the Irish language, the Irish-speaking community was occasionally represented as "mute" in Elizabethan texts. This muteness in itself was, on the other hand, of a barbarian and noisy quality:

> But what remains when speech is denied is not necessarily silence. The mute are not noiseless and these texts are full of strange, disturbing sounds: cries, yelps, groans, strangulated shouts, whispers. The language which is refused a hearing as articulate speech is picked up instead as a chorus of forlorn and menacing sounds-effects. [...]

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[8] According to Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, the *metonymic gap* is a "term for what is arguably the most subtle form of abrogation. The metonymic gap is that cultural gap formed when appropriations of a colonial language insert unglossed words, phrases or passages from a first language, or concepts, allusions or references that may be unknown to the reader. [...] The local reader is thus able to represent his or her world to the colonizer (and others) in the metropolitan language, and at the same time to signal and emphasize a difference from it. In effect, the writer is saying 'I am using your language so that you will understand my world, but you will also know by the differences in the way I use it that you cannot share my experience'" (*Key Concepts* 137). Palmer argues that failing to recognise the difference in experience and language between the two countries and between the British and the Irish culture has considerably added to the stereotypical rendering of the Irish population (40–73).

> There is nothing casual about downgrading words into cries, transforming the meaning of another language into babble. (Palmer 64–65)

For decades, the Irish, therefore, were defined from the outside and their stereotypical portrayal on the English stage was regarded as a given truth among British audiences. Maria and her father Richard Edgeworth, among others, tried to unmask the cliché of the Irish as "hot-heated, rude, and nomadic" (Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland* 9). In their essay on "Irish Bulls," for instance, they criticised the prototypical colonial conduct of lowering the colonised in status and character to prove to the colonised that they were essentially unfit to govern themselves.[9] In an imaginary discussion between one representative of each of the two countries, the Englishman declares, rather surprised, after his visit to the island:

> I imagined that I should have nothing to drink but whiskey, that I should have nothing to eat but potatoes, that I should sleep in mud-walled cabins; that I should, when awake, hear nothing but the Irish howl, the Irish brogue, Irish answers and Irish bulls; and that if I smiled at any of these things, a hundred pistols would fly from their holsters to *give* or *demand* satisfaction. But experience taught me better things: I found that the stories I had heard were *tales of other times*. Their hospitality, indeed, continues to this day. (127, original emphasis)

These expectations of the true Irish as a savage, drunken creature producing strange, animal-like sounds recall images in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* of the supposedly uncivilised and savage Caliban. Prospero describes him as "[a] freckled whelp, hag-born – not honoured with / A human shape" (*The Tempest* 1.2.282-283). Caliban, a prototypical colonial character, whose name echoes the word *cannibal*, is also said to have produced strange sounds and growls when Prospero and Miranda first came to the island. Miranda – initially pitying Caliban – taught him to speak, an act she now bitterly regrets:

> MIRANDA. Abhorrèd slave,
> Which any print of goodness wilt not take,
> Being capable of all ill! I pitied thee,
> Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each hour
> One thing or other. When thou didst not, savage,
> Know thine own meaning, but wouldst gabble like
> A thing most brutish, I endowed thy purposes
> With words that made them known. (1.2.351-358)

Caliban, on the other hand, argues that his deficiencies in English are not his own fault; Miranda's illness is to be blamed. Due to her weak health, he only

[9] The expression 'Irish Bull' refers to the supposedly garrulous personality of the Irish and is often used as a synonym to describe the stage-Irishman ("Stage-Irishman" 533–535).

learnt to curse properly in the foreign language: "You taught me language, and my profit on't / Is, I know how to curse. The red-plague rid you / For learning me your language!" (1.2.363-365) Postcolonial readings have since questioned the colonial reading and representation of Caliban. Barker and Hulme, for instance, stress that Caliban is indeed presented by the other characters as a sub-human monster. When his language is examined more closely, however, his words are deeply poetic and, arguably, among the most lyrical in the play (238). His description of the island is of a dream-like quality, which reveals his love for the island and undermines his representation as a savage (*The Tempest* 3.2.127-135).

Similarly, the Englishman in Edgeworth's narrative has to acknowledge that the notions he had of the Irish people differ considerably from his experiences. He admits that his preconceptions were stereotypical and prejudiced. Remarkably, however, he does not denounce the notions of the Irish as a stupid and uncivilised people as mere fantasies or misinformation. Calling these stories "*tales of other times*," he concludes that, in this case, these representations must be truthful reminiscences of the past (127, original emphasis).

Postcolonial studies further show that the invention of colonised characters like the stage-Irishman is by no means an exception and should be read against the background of imperialism and colonialism.[10] The stereotypes used to describe the colonised people, provide insight into the fears and world-view of the coloniser, whereas the justification of this connection with the colonised either remains obscure or does not exist at all. Organised in a system of binary oppositions between coloniser and colonised, colonial literature has been used as an ideological instrument to convey the attitude of the *other* as inferior, negative and second-rate. Not surprisingly, clichés of colonised peoples all over the world, therefore, resemble one another: "Colonial power tends to identify subject people as passive, in need of guidance, incapable of governing themselves, romantic, passionate, having a disregard for rules, barbaric" (Balzano 92). Kiberd, among others, distinguishes two types of stage-Irishmen, one consisting of "the threatening, vainglorious soldier," the other of "the feckless but cheerily reassuring servant" (*Inventing Ireland* 12). The representative of the first group "was a landowner, a man of means, with military experience" who is thought to have had his roots in the character of

[10] I will adapt Kiberd's definition of the two terms *imperialism* and *colonialism* since they fully serve my purpose. He defines *imperialism* as "the seizure of land from its owners and their consequent subjugation by military force and cultural programming," such as "the description, mapping and ecological transformation of the occupied territory," whereas *colonialism* is referred to as "the planting of settlers in the land thus seized, for the purpose of expropriating its wealth and for the promotion of the occupier's trade and culture" (*Inventing Ireland* 5).

Captain Macmorris in Shakespeare's *Henry V* (Murray, "Drama 1690–1800" 504). The following minor scene, spoken in prose, is exemplary of Captain Macmorris' personality. The hot-tempered Irish Captain is easily infuriated by the Welsh Captain Fluellen when he feels that he is treated disrespectfully by the Welshman:

> FLUELLEN. Captain Macmorris, I think, look you, under your correction, there is not many of your nation –
> MACMORRIS. Of my nation? What ish my nation? Ish a villain, and a bastard, and a knave, and a rascal? What ish my nation? Who talks of my nation? (*Henry V* 3.2.121-126)

This presumably drunken soldier, who completely disavows his own nation and the images of his people, made a great impression on the English audience. The English wanted to see a savage or traitor in the Irish as well as "disorderly manners and insalubrious habits, together with the Hiberno-English dialect or brogue and a concomitant propensity for illogical utterance increasingly identified as his exclusive property and called 'the Irish bull'" ("Stage-Irishman" 533). The captain, similar to the servant type, was portrayed as "ignorant by English standards and [using] the language inefficiently and at times ridiculously, with Gaelicisms sprinkled throughout his speech" (Murray, "Drama 1690–1800" 504). The second group of stage-Irishmen consisted of the "uneducated servant whose mistakes, verbal and logical alike, provide the basis of popularity" (504). According to Murray, Farquhar's comic Irishman, Teague (*The Twin Rivals*, first staged in 1702), for instance, who "is presented with a broad accent, spelt phonetically, and a tendency to contradict himself foolishly, using what became known as Irish bulls," serves as a prime example of this group and "offered a variation on the Shakespearian fool" (504).[11] To please the English audience, Irish playwrights, such as Farquhar, Thomas Sheridan (Captain O'Blunder in *The Brave Irishman: or, Captain O'Blunder)* and his son Richard Brinsley Sheridan (Sir Lucius O'Trigger in *The Rivals*), complied with this taste of portraying the Irishman either "as amusing and harmless" or as "sinister and dangerous" (504). Although their portrayals of the Irish characters cannot be taken very seriously

[11] According to *A Dictionary of Hiberno-English* the name "Teague /ti:g/ also Teigue, Taig" serves as a "nickname for the typical Irishman, especially a Catholic" and is derived from the Irish word *Tadhg* (268).
As in the case of Macmorris, Teague's statements – mostly due to his strong accent – were interpreted as a sign of his stupidity: "Deel tauke [the devil take] me but dish ish a most shweet business indeed; maishters play the fool, and shervants must shuffer for it. I am prishoner in the constable's house, be me shoul, and shent abrode to fetch some bail for my maishter; but foo shall bail poor Teague agra? [Enter Constance] O, dere ish my maishter's old love. Indeed, I fear dish business will spoil his fortune" (Farquhar 137).

since the plays were written as farce or comedy, the Irish playwrights appear to have felt that the only way to succeed in England was to submit to this tradition.

2. Carleton, Synge, O'Casey and Autobiographical Accounts: Aspiring 'Authenticity'

Characters like Captain Macmorris, Teague, Captain O'Blunder or Sir Lucius O'Trigger called for an answer. In Ireland, an occupied country, which had been defined and controlled from the outside for decades and whose representatives on stage were designed to please English audiences, writers started to oppose these stereotypical characterisations by inventing their own images. In his popular play *The Playboy of the Western World*, John Millington Synge took the traditional role of the stage-Irishman to the extreme.[12] Nevertheless, Synge did not just denounce the stage-Irishman as fantasy; in some of his narratives, he also tried to offer a realistic account of what he perceived as true Irishness. Synge, together with authors such as William Carleton, deliberately moved away from the stereotypical rendering of the Irish people. Carleton regarded the stage-Irishmen as an invention of the ignorant English. In his "Autobiographical Introduction" to the *Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry*, published between 1842 and 1844, he rejects the stage-Irishman and is quite outraged by the character traits ascribed to the Irish:

> From the immortal bard of Avon down to the writers of the present day, neither play nor farce has ever been presented to Englishmen, in which, when an Irishman *is* introduced, he is not drawn as a broad grotesque blunderer, every sentence he speaks involving a bull, and every act the result of headlong folly, or cool but unstudied effrontery. I do not remember an instance in which he acts upon the stage any other part than that of the buffoon of the piece, uttering language which, wherever it may have been found, was at all events never heard in Ireland, unless upon the boards of a theatre. [...] [T]hey [i.e. such characters] never had existence except in the imagination of those who were as ignorant of the Irish people as they were of their language and feelings. Even Sheridan himself was forced to pander to this erroneous estimate

[12] When the protagonist in *The Playboy of the Western World*, Christy, first appears on stage, he claims to have killed his father with a spade. The eloquence – taken as a typical Irish characteristic – with which he tells his story along with the inhabitants' admiration for his bold, and within the family context extremely rare, action briefly make him something of a hero. However, when his father, who has miraculously survived his attack, enters the village tavern, Christy is suddenly seen as a coward and a liar by the villagers. Intending to regain the esteem he has lost in their eyes, Christy attacks his father for a second time; however, this attempt equally fails to meet its end. The final reconciliation with his father prevents Christy, the playboy from the Western World, from being hanged by the local inhabitants.

> and distorted conception of our character; for, after all, Sir Lucius O'Trigger was *his* Irishman, but not Ireland's Irishman. (i-ii, original emphasis)

Consequently, Carleton claims that his authorial purpose of publishing these stories is to remove "many absurd prejudices which have existed from time immemorial against his countrymen" (i). He strongly disagrees with the point of view that the words uttered by the Irish could not be called a language and argues that bilingualism as well as the transition of the people's mother tongue from Irish to English might make the Irish look dull and ignorant. Carleton hints at the fact that the picture drawn of the Irish offers significant insight into the English psyche: the occupiers used their power to disparage the Irish peasants in order to justify their presence in the country. In the nineteenth century, however, Anglo-Irish writers began to publish – literally, to make public – the 'true' story of their people: "the intellect of the country was beginning to feel its strength, and put forth its power" (vii). This statement makes clear that Carleton primarily understood history as a question of power. Those who are in power also have the power to select and define facts, which in turn depend on one's perspective. History, being recorded from someone's point of view, can never be neutral. Consequently, all history is fictional to some degree. As there are always multiple views of events, 'the' public view is inevitably constituted by means of power. Although he recognised one of the crucial postmodern principles, Carleton did not grasp the full implications of his insight. In the twentieth century, Doctorow rightly argues that

> [...] history as written by historians is clearly insufficient. And the historians are the first to express skepticism [sic] over this 'objectivity' of the discipline. A lot of people discovered after World War II and in the fifties that much of what was taken by the younger generations as history was highly interpreted history. [...] And it turned out that there were not only individuals but whole peoples whom we had simply written out of our history – black people, Chinese people, Indians. (58–59)

Thus, despite offering an extensive analysis of how stereotyping functions, Carleton cannot avoid falling into the same trap; he promises the reader that his "exhibitions of Irish peasant life, in its most comprehensive sense, may be relied on as truthful and authentic" (viii). He further aims "to give a panorama of Irish life among the people – comprising at one view all the strong points of their general character – their loves, sorrows, superstitions, piety, amusements, crimes and virtues" (xxiv). Carleton's stories free the Irish from many stereotypes. At the same time, however, he unconsciously creates new clichés and myths about them.[13]

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[13] Roland Barthes argues that "*myth is a type of speech*," a "system of communication" conveying a particular message (Barthes 27, original emphasis). Talking about the function of myth-

As indicated above, Synge is another author who tried to present an authentic and realistic account of Irish life, and, therefore, put a strong emphasis on publicising his characters' private lives. In the 1890s, Yeats urged Synge to visit the Aran Islands for inspiration and in order to "find a life that had never been expressed in literature" ("The Trembling of the Veil" 343). In his book *The Aran Islands*, Synge speaks of his encounter with the islanders and states that his aim is to describe what he "met with among them, inventing nothing and changing nothing that is essential" (xi). Still, the reader is not given a completely objective account. After all, the author has to make choices and despite his realistic report, Synge observes the islanders' life from his position as an outsider. Having come to the islands as a foreigner, he is not familiar with the culture or the customs of the Aran Islands. When he first arrives, he speaks very little Irish and finds it difficult to communicate in the local inhabitants' language. Synge includes those aspects in his narrative that strike him as amazing or unusual in order to introduce the reader to the hidden side of the isles. He offers a large number of examples of the islanders' oral culture, belief in the supernatural and strong family bonds. Through his description of what the west of Ireland is 'really' like, Synge turns the secluded, private life of the Aran Islands into a pastoral tale or a myth:

> It is likely that much of the intelligence and charm of these people is due to the absence of any division of labour, and to the correspondingly wide development of each individual, whose varied knowledge and skill necessitates a considerable activity of mind. Each man can speak two languages. He is a skilled fisherman, and can manage a curagh with extraordinary nerve and dexterity. He can farm simply, burn kelp, cut out pampooties, mend nets, build and thatch a house, and make a cradle or a coffin. His work changes with the seasons in a way that keeps him free from the dullness that comes to people who have always the same occupation. The danger of his life on the sea gives him the alertness of the primitive hunter, and the long nights he spends fishing in his curagh bring him some of the emotions that are thought peculiar to men who have lived with the arts. (77)

This glorifying account of life on the Aran Islands illustrates Synge's geographical orientation; England is no longer the definite centre, and the Irish mainland ceases to be the periphery. The Aran Islands, as part of the west of Ireland, represent that space which generations of Irish (Catholics) were forced to withdraw to under the force of the English colonisers, and which has been lost elsewhere: "I [i.e. Synge] became indescribably mournful, for I felt that this little corner on the face of the world, and the people who live in this,

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making, Holman and Harmon stress that "[v]arious modern writers have insisted on the necessity of *myth* as a material with which the artist works, and in varying ways and degrees have appropriated the old *myths* or created new ones as necessary substances to give order and frame of meaning to their personal perceptions and images" ("Myth" 306, original emphasis).

have a peace and dignity from which we are shut for ever" (104). This space which was preserved on the Aran Islands, "[t]he whole spirit of the west of Ireland, with its strange wildness and reserve," is now presented as the untouched true Ireland (69). In his narrative, the islands thus become the new periphery, the hidden *other*, where a language and culture that are distinct from the mainland's can be explored. Moreover, the language and culture found on the Aran Islands, ironically enough, still show characteristic traits of the former – in other parts of the country long forgotten – Irish *self*.

However enthusiastic Synge's account of life on the islands and however great his yearning for the loss of these qualities on the mainland, Kiberd rightly notes that there is an entirely different side to reality which Synge cannot suppress or hide: "In his writings, [Synge] worried constantly about the gap between a beautiful culture and the poverty that can underlie it" (*Inventing Ireland* 172). Amongst the locals, Synge therefore perceives a certain depression and desperation. Due to the harsh climate and the lack of work witnessed on the Aran Islands, young people leave the islands either to work on the mainland or to emigrate to the United States:

> The maternal feeling is so powerful on these islands that it gives a life of torment to the women. Their sons grow up to be banished as soon as they are of age, or to live here in continual danger on the sea; their daughters go away also, or are worn out in their youth with bearing children that grow up to harass them in their own turn a little later. (*The Aran Islands* 54)

Although Synge meticulously gathers the community's manifold customs and habits in order to expose what he perceives as true Irishness, he cannot deny that his representation of the local public simultaneously is an Irishness on the verge of extinction.

Regardless of the fact that Synge is welcome in every house on the islands to gather folktales and pieces of history, the power to share their privateness lies entirely in the hands of the islanders. Aware of the tension between his readers' interest in the unknown Gaelic culture and the islanders' right to privacy, Synge has internalised the clash between public and private interests. As the author of *The Aran Islands*, he gathers as much information about the inhabitants as possible, but on a personal level he is careful not to abuse people's confidence and friendship. For example, once Synge decides not to go to the wake of an old woman, fearing that his "presence might jar upon the mourners" (25). Nonetheless, even in situations in which he tries to stay away from the inhabitants or to take the position of a distant observer, he cannot avoid witnessing and to some extent participating in these people's traditions and customs:

> [...] all last evening I could hear the strokes of a hammer in the yard, where, in the middle of a little crowd of idlers, the next of kin laboured slowly at the coffin. To-day, before the hour for the funeral, poteen was served to a number of men who stood about upon the road, and a portion was brought to me in my room. (25)

In that sense, private and public knowledge in Synge's account mingle and are characterised by smooth transitions. In fact, the book proves how thin the demarcating line between public and private knowledge is. This is particularly the case given that, no matter how familiar Synge becomes with the islanders' culture, he remains a stranger until the end. Although he reaches a high command of the Irish language over the four consecutive years that he visits the Aran Islands and although the locals are always hospitable and eager to talk to him, they never consider him a true member of their community:

> There is hardly an hour I am with them that I do not feel the shock of some inconceivable idea, and then again the shock of some vague emotion that is familiar to them and to me. On some days I feel this island as a perfect home and resting place; on other days I feel I am a waif among the people. I can feel more with them than they can feel with me, and while I wander among them, they like me sometimes, and laugh at me sometimes, yet never know what I am doing. (58–59)

The local inhabitants, shaped by the harsh conditions of life on the islands, never come to fully understand Synge's way of life. Synge mentions the three questions these people are most interested in: "[...] whether I am a rich man, whether I am married, and whether I have ever seen a poorer place than these islands" (85). The islanders' pragmatic and unromantic concepts of love and marriage are indeed one of the major differences between Synge and the local inhabitants. Every year, they suggest that he should marry. After all, "a man who is not married is no better than an old jackass. He goes into his sister's house, and into his brother's house; he eats a bit in this place and a bit in another place, but he has no home for himself; like an old jackass straying on the rocks" (65). Although Synge is accepted on the Aran Islands, the quote gives insight into the islanders' strong sense of belonging and their strict rules. No one is supposed to share other people's private space. In this community, a home and a family of one's own are a must. Family bonds, community, a close relationship to nature and a deep belief in the supernatural are thus elements seen to represent the people on the Aran Islands.

However, Synge's decision to keep the power of sharing privateness in the hands of the local community also means that what is presented in *The Aran Islands* as their private world is only part of the picture. Some themes or traumatising experiences are only hinted at vaguely, but never discussed in detail in the text. Two possible explanations may be found for this phenomenon. On the one hand, certain issues might be regarded by the local

inhabitants as too personal or painful to be shared with someone who is neither a member of the family nor the community. From this point of view, the islanders' reticence to move beyond a particular point of privateness would be responsible for the void or lack of public knowledge. On the other hand, however, the islanders' silence could also result from the more profound unease or inability to articulate the most disturbing or distressing aspects of their lives in general. This interpretation is further enforced by other painful episodes in Irish history which have hardly ever been voiced in literary texts.

In fact, the tendency of leaving aside certain disturbing themes and aspects of Irish life is perfectly characteristic of nineteenth century Anglo-Irish literature. I fully agree with Kinsella, who argues that quite amazingly "[s]ilence, on the whole, is the real condition of Irish literature in the nineteenth century" (810). Even in the texts of writers – such as Carleton and Synge – who strove to paint a realistic picture of Ireland, the two most devastating developments for the Irish in the nineteenth century, namely the famines of the 1840s and the subsequent massive emigration, do not feature.[14] Although largely ignored in literature, "the single most important event in Ireland in the modern period," the Great Famine, actually "marked a watershed in many areas of Irish life – demographics, economics, society and culture" (Whelan 137). In a population of roughly eight million, close to one million Irish people died of hunger and up to two million people emigrated, nearly reducing the population by half within a few decades (Daly 732). According to Kinealy, "[o]ne of the disturbing features of the Great Hunger is that despite the fact that it occurred so late in European

[14] Carleton's novel *The Black Prophet: A Tale of Irish Famine* (which was first published in *The Dublin University Magazine* in 1846) describes the devastating effects that the famine between 1817 and 1822 had already had on the country. In this novel, the narrator compares Ireland to a "vast lazar-house [that is, a leper house] filled with famine, disease, and death" and he suggests that "[t]he very skies of heaven were hung with the black drapery of the grave, for never since, nor within the memory of man before it, did the clouds present shapes of such gloomy and funeral import. Hearses, coffins, long funeral processions, and all the dark emblems of mortality were reflected, as it were, on the sky, from the terrible works of pestilence and famine which were going forward on the earth beneath it. [...] To any person passing through the country such a combination of startling and awful appearances was presented as has probably never been witnessed since. Go where you might, every object reminded you of the fearful desolation that was progressing around you. The features of the people were gaunt, their eyes wild and hollow, and their gait feeble and tottering. Pass through the fields, and you were met by little groups bearing their home on their shoulders, and that with difficulty, a coffin or two of them" (125). The narrator's deeply cynical comment that such misery has never been witnessed since, however, indicates that misery of the famine experienced in the 1840s is beyond description. In fact, in his preface to the novel, Carleton claims that "the strongest imagery of Fiction is frequently transcended by the terrible realities of Truth" (124–125).

history, and was so fully documented and chronicled, so many silences have remained" ("The Famine Killed Everything" 34). In other words, although a reasonable number of historical documents do in fact exist and although "[t]he Famine [...] helped to shape the identity of Irish people and that of their descendants throughout the world," people's suffering remained mostly "hidden, unexplored, and unknown" for decades (2). Eagleton interprets this "muteness," which became endemic not only of the actual victims but of later Irish generations as well, as a sign of such a devastating and traumatising event that it "strains at the limits of the articulable, and is truly in this sense the Irish Auschwitz" (13). Killen, a historian, believed that "anger, hatred, fear and compassion have mixed with shame to produce a reluctance, possibly an inability, to address the enormity of the national tragedy" (as quoted by Kinealy, "The Famine Killed Everything" 18). Inarticulateness, a colonial trauma as well as survivors' guilt are, therefore, three reasons that have been put forward to explain why the Irish failed to tell this "tale of unimaginable suffering" for so long (Peck 145). O'Connor's reading of "malignant shame" stresses in Kinealy's eyes "the shame and the feeling of guilt experienced by the survivors" which was "carried on from generation to generation" and was present at an "individual, cultural or community level" (as quoted by Kinealy, "The Famine Killed Everything" 14).[15] Tóibín, on the other hand, wonders whether the problem "may lie in the relationship between the catastrophe and analytic narrative" (9). "How do you write about the Famine? What tone do you use?" are two questions which he raises to indicate that there appears to have been some unspoken consensus for generations that the Famine is either a subject which is too personal or intimate to be published or that there is simply no language available for such disturbing feelings (9). After all, in the nineteenth century, "psychology was in its infancy [...]. Thus, there was no language or structural method for understanding the psychological impact of this tragedy across generational time" (Peck 143). Unable to articulate their agony or shame, the victims and their ancestors are said to have remained in a state of immobilisation – a typical response to trauma – for generations (152). Thus, the overwhelming majority of writers hesitated to address this desolation and misery in their literary texts; only in a very small number of minor and mostly disregarded works are the Irish famines and their consequences

[15] Peck further explains that "[f]amines create a situation of deep moral ambivalence in which it appears as if it is within everyone's power to at least share their food. It is easy for famine survivors, in desperate circumstances, to translate this simple fact into an irrational self-statement or belief that reads something like, 'I wouldn't have survived without eating and yet my eating ensured the deaths of those who did not get the food I ate.' In cognitive behavioral terms, this is called a cognitive distortion. The simple act of eating can turn people's sense of self into that of a [sic] having been complicit in a mass murder that they did not initiate" (159).

actually explored.[16] Therefore, a certain void concerning the private knowledge and experiences of these events has remained, which not even the wave of historical publications, released between 1995 and 1997 following the Famine commemorations, have managed to fully compensate for.[17]

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16 *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writings* contains some of the rare exceptions, namely Peadar Ó Laoghaire's autobiographical account of this period in "Mo Sgéal Féin (My Own Story)," Asenath Nicholson's excerpts from her book "Lights and Shades of Ireland" and William Steuart Trench's description as a land agent in "Realities of Irish Life" (Vol. II, 129–157). Since the 1960s, several Anglo-Irish writers, such as Tom Murphy in *Famine* (published in 1968), Tom MacIntyre in *The Great Hunger* (1983) and Brian Friel in *Translations*, have begun to address the various "causes, impact and consequences of the Great Famine" (Day 213). However, as O'Toole has pointed out, despite the fact that some texts are actually set in the 1840s, most texts are "much more concerned with the contemporary world, with the spiritual and emotional famine of their own times" (as quoted by Tóibín 28).
In 1979, Liam O'Flaherty published his novel *Famine* offering a "panoramic portrayal of the Great Famine" by displaying in a realistic style how three generations of the Kilmartin family, who are deeply "rooted in a place and time which contains and defines them," were inflicted by the potato blight and the subsequent onset of the plague (Sheeran 216 and 217). The novel does not only voice the angst and the horrors experienced by the starving population in a meticulous manner, but it also juxtaposes the peasants' mutual help in their attempt to fight the inevitable with the cruel exploitation of the landlords and the injustices carried out by the oppressive – and at times colonial – forces within the community. Those in power – the English ascendancy as well as the rising local middle class who had begun to trade with the colonisers – in this novel are not only shown to let down the native population at their time of misery but also to actively have aggravated their suffering. The foreign colonisers are, for instance, represented by Captain Chadwick, who, according to Sheeran, "ranks highest in the scale of perfidy" as his relationship to the native population could be described as one "of torturer to victim, more brutalized himself by the violence he inflicts than those on whom he inflicts it" (225).

17 Ever since the Irish Famine, the political assessment of this period in Irish history has provoked a fierce controversy over the British position as well as over Irish food exports to the United Kingdom. John Mitchel, one of the leading political writers in the nineteenth century, coined the famous phrase "[t]he Almighty, indeed, sent the potato blight, but the English created the famine" (219). Although the famine was initially caused by the failure of the potato crop, the Irish "felt betrayed by their colonial rulers" (Woodham-Smith as quoted by Peck 156). As a result of the Act of Union in 1801, Ireland was governed from Westminster during the Famine. "[A] United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland had been created but, as the Famine demonstrated, the political union was far from being united" (Kinealy, *The Great Irish Famine* 18). The prevailing ideology in England towards Ireland could be described as a "policy of non-intervention" which "coincided with the dominant philosophical orthodoxy that no man should depend on another" (19). This British stance aroused the strong feeling amongst the local population that the English could have alleviated the Irish people's distress and misery if they had wanted to. In actual fact, Kinealy argues that most historians agree that this tragedy "was neither inevitable nor unavoidable" (*This Great Calamity* xv). As early as the 1860s, John Mitchel, amongst others, accused the British government not only of indifference to Irish misery but also of actively pursuing a genocidal policy. In the introductory comment on John Mitchel's essays in *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*, Deane emphasises that "Mitchel's belief that the British government used the Famine as an

As this case illustrates, misrepresentation as well as lack of intimate truth and knowledge cannot always be explained with power structures and the colonisers' attempt to repress pieces of truth that are different from their own perspective. In various cases in this chapter, it has been suggested that the Anglo-Irish writers published their private experiences and voiced their own points of view to oppose the dominant discourse of the colonisers, who defined public truth due to their position in and view of society. In this particular instance, however, a new explanation emerges: this time, the void is not caused by the colonisers who wish to silence alternative versions of truth but by the Irish themselves. Inarticulateness with regard to the Great Famine and the subsequent mass emigration of their own people shows that, whether consciously or unconsciously, (private) knowledge is withheld by the survivors themselves: in this case, no authentic or realistic account of the events is provided. The emotions involved in these painful experiences might have proved to be too overwhelming or thoroughly undesirable. Or, on a more general level, the writers may have felt that language failed them with regard to the Great Famine.

Despite the inarticulateness surrounding the specific historical incidents of the Famine and the subsequent mass emigration, the otherwise long tradition of offering a realistic account of Irish life was continued at the beginning of the twentieth century by Sean O'Casey. As the plots of O'Casey's plays are fictional, they naturally differ considerably from Synge's approach and aims. However, realism in O'Casey is evoked by people's accents and dialects: their slang and the imitation of Gaelic structures in the English language intensify the feeling of Irishness. On the other hand, people's harsh living conditions are examined carefully. Focusing "not on the deeds of warriors, but on the pangs of the poor," O'Casey's plays spell out the devastating effects which poverty, misery and war had on working-class Dublin (Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland* 218). A sombre and dark picture of Irish slum life is painted, including scenes of violence and alcoholism. Massive social deprivation along with groundbreaking political changes resulting in utter "chassis," that is chaos, are shown to be the main worries the slum-dwellers in the capital were faced with at the time (*Juno and the Paycock* 21).

The historical developments in Ireland between 1916 and the establishment of the Free State in 1922 form the background of O'Casey's Dublin trilogy. *The Shadow of the Gunman* (1923) illustrates the effect which the War of Independence had on people. In *Juno and the Paycock* (1924) personal betrayal is set against lost hopes in the Irish Civil War, and *The Plough and the Stars*

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instrument of genocide became an integral part of the Irish nationalist crusade against British rule" (176).

(1926), finally, encompasses the personal consequences that the Easter Rising in 1916 had on the Irish. Combining social and political issues, O'Casey's plays are therefore characterised by an entanglement of the private with the public realm. Murray's analysis of public and private space in O'Casey's Dublin trilogy serves as an excellent starting point for my own study:

> Each play juxtaposes two worlds, the private and the public. The private is the life of the tenement dwellers, where indeed privacy is hardly to be thought of: and yet the families who encroach freely on each other's space are preoccupied with personal and domestic problems. The public life in O'Casey's plays inevitably means the political: he shows how the affairs of state and the ambitions of freedom hold the lives of ordinary people in a vice. There is no escape from the battles raging in the streets. There is no hiding place from the consequences of a movement dedicated to overthrowing the oppressor. [...] Compassion takes precedence over political allegiance or ideology; each of the three Dublin plays is called a 'tragedy.' The laws of tragedy insist that pity and terror rather than political ideas should be primary. O'Casey's great achievement was to rise above local allegiances and turn the harsh conditions of working-class life into the materials of modern art. (*Sean O'Casey* 17)

While I fully agree with Murray's interpretation, it would be beneficial, both for a deeper understanding of O'Casey's texts as well as for the subsequent discussion of Friel's plays, to distinguish between different shades of private and public realms in O'Casey. In fact, traditional boundaries between these two spheres are constantly blurred. The atmosphere among the people who live squeezed into these tenements resembles that in a station concourse where people enter and leave just as they please:

> [O]ver two-thirds of the tenement-dwellers lived in a single room. On average, over fifty people lived in each tenement. Such a setting dictated the controlling mood of the Dublin plays, each of which is a study in claustrophobia, in the helpless availability of persons, denied any right to privacy and doomed to live in one another's pockets. (Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland* 219)

The rooms, in which the plays are set and where the people are generally deprived of privacy, can be regarded as semi-public spaces, comparable to Habermas' public sphere in the political realm.[18] As indicated above, this sphere was established within the private realm in the eighteenth century according to Habermas. O'Casey's characters basically have to accept a certain lack of intimacy and privacy in environments where they witness whatever is happening in other people's lives and partake in their joys and broken dreams.

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18 The diagram Habermas proposed to graphically outline the public and the private spheres in the eighteenth century can be found in Chapter II (p. 15).

Nevertheless, this proximity among the community members is not translated into true intimacy or confidential discourse. On the contrary, there is little agreement between the neighbours. Living in the same tenement by accident, they may well participate in each other's privateness, but are only loosely related apart from that. Jealousy, distrust, unease, and most importantly, different political convictions, are much more common than empathy, kindness or even friendship.

As pointed out by Murray, the private sphere in O'Casey is not just undermined by the inhabitants of the tenement, but is repeatedly invaded by the actual public sphere, by the political developments occurring in the streets of Dublin. In each of the three plays, O'Casey chose to include large windows in his stage settings. Initially, these symbolise the transition between the private and the public sphere, but they come to represent the blur between the boundaries: noises enter from the outside on many occasions and figures can at various points of the plays be seen passing in the streets. From a metaphorical point of view, different rumours or pieces of news concerning recent political developments enter from the outside world and mingle with the private realm. Occasionally, the boundaries even collapse when public figures, promulgating their political views directly, invade the private space and world of O'Casey's characters and suggest that the political bears the right to overrule the individual, the private sphere. In this final step, the private space is thus literally overrun by the public realm: both the freedom fighters and the British soldiers, representing politics or the state, truly transfer the political turmoil into the private space and world of the Dublin slum-dwellers.

In O'Casey, the private realm is thus characterised by different degrees of public invasion depending on whether it is the neighbouring community or political events which intrude on the individual, domestic sphere. The private realm as defined in traditional terms will at a later stage of my study be shown to have been reduced to a space of sickness and death. These various invasions of their private space ultimately politicise the inhabitants; it is impossible for the characters to avoid politics in O'Casey's Dublin plays. Each of them has to take a stand one way or the other. This attitude of the powerful forces in the state who value the political sphere over the domestic one is criticised long before military actions from the streets are transferred into the tenements. The political instability in the country has negative consequences on O'Casey's families: his characters mostly live in dysfunctional families. Just as O'Casey's communities are the opposites of closely-knit groups, Chothia claims that families are far from united since "[w]hatever refuge the family offers, it is full of discord, opposing interests and misunderstandings" (128). For example, the main character in *Juno and the Paycock*, Captain Jack Boyle, does indeed complain about his children's lack of respect towards him and his

having to live in a society where human beings are not deeply embedded in families:

> BOYLE. Chiselurs [i. e. children] don't care a damn now about their parents, they're bringin' their fathers' grey hairs down with a sorra to the grave, and laughin' at it, laughin' at it. Ah is suppose it's just the same everywhere – the whole world's in a state o' chassis! (21)

In actual fact, McDonald argues that "families and communities [in O'Casey are] destroyed by political violence" in the Dublin trilogy, as the differing values, attitudes and political convictions within the families are without exception drowned in the blood of some family or community member ("Dublin Trilogy" 136).

Although the pre-eminence of the public – political – sphere over the private or domestic realm was strongly emphasised in Ireland at the beginning of the twentieth century, O'Casey's Dublin plays make the playwright's own unease over this tendency perfectly evident. He disapproves of the political ambitions proclaimed by the group currently in power of the public sphere. He further disagrees with these people who consequently deny the right of private sphere and demand complete submission of any individual goals and ambitions to the Irish people's political ends. Personally favouring the domestic sphere over the public in his plays, O'Casey claims that, quite regardless of the political difficulties at this stage in Irish history, people's immense social worries rather than the political situation found in Ireland should really be under scrutiny. Hence, McDonald notes that

> O'Casey debunks the mythology of Mother Ireland, who sends her sons out to die for the recovery of her four green fields, replacing it with the images of real suffering mothers, and families torn apart by men drunk on ineffable dreams of political utopia and doggedly sober on a doctrine of arid, inflexible political principles. ("Dublin Trilogy" 137)

McDonald believes that "[f]or O'Casey, like Brecht, the horror of human suffering is based primarily in its avoidability [...]" (*Tragedy* 87). O'Casey's Dublin plays show politics in the emerging Irish state to be a destructive force where families erroneously sacrifice their sons to the country for their heroic ideals. Heroic deeds carried out in the mistaken interest of the Irish public are deconstructed in O'Casey. They fail and more than anything cause discord among families and community members: "[...] the Dublin trilogy teaches us to avoid the dangers of political idealism through a demonstration of the terrible destruction these ideals cause to family life, to the hearth and home humanity represented by the women" (McDonald, *Tragedy* 36). Men are indeed portrayed as cowards, unemployed or lazy fighters who enter battle for

their ideals or have died for them, whereas a number of women embody O'Casey's insight that "one drop of human kindness is worth more than the deepest draughts of the red wine of idealism" (as quoted by McDonald, "Dublin Trilogy" 137). In *Juno and the Paycock*, Juno Boyle, one of O'Casey's strong female figures, neither supports nor believes in the attitudes of her children. Johnny as a former freedom fighter and Mary as a member of a Trade Union are two representatives of the Irish who fight for their principles in the streets. Their mother, however, has chosen a much more pragmatic approach to life:

> MARY. It doesn't matther what you say, ma – a principle's a principle.
> MRS BOYLE. Yis, an' when I go into oul' Murphy's tomorrow, an' he gets to know that, instead o' payin' all, I'm goin' to borry more, what'll he say when I tell him a principle's a principle? What'll we do if he refuses to give us any more on tick? (8)

In spite of nursing her son in a loving way, Mrs Boyle is completely disillusioned by the result of his commitment to Ireland: Johnny's hip was hit by a bullet during Easter Week and a bomb shattered his arm and, in her own words, "put the finishin' touch on him" (9).[19] When Mary is dismissed as soon as her father discovers that she is pregnant with an illegitimate child, Juno's parental feeling for her daughter lets her take a far-reaching decision:

> MRS BOYLE. We'll go. Come, Mary, an' we'll never come back here agen. Let your father furrage for himself now; I've done all I could an' it was all no use – he'll be hopeless till the end of his days. I've got a little room in me sisther's where we'll stop till your trouble is over, an' then we'll work together for the sake of the baby.
> MARY. My poor child that'll have no father!
> MRS BOYLE. It'll have what's far betther – it'll have two mothers. (83–84)

Contrary to Juno's courageous resolution to help her daughter, none of the so-called heroic political actions O'Casey's male characters undertake improve the social situation for the individuals or the families in the tenements. Most characters are shown to adhere to mere ideals and fixed political concepts which fail to address the serious social situation. In fact, their attitudes display a

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[19] Asked to attend a political meeting and being reminded of his former oath, Johnny refers to his state of health by claiming: "I won't go! Haven't I done enough for Ireland! I've lost me arm, and me hip's desthroyed so that I'll never be able to walk right agen! Good God, haven't I done enough for Ireland?" (59) The young interlocutor's reaction to Johnny's statement is one of the many examples in O'Casey's plays which underlines that political extremists take their military operation extremely seriously: "Boyle, no man can do enough for Ireland!" (59) Hence, it is primarily this favouring of nationalism over socialism which O'Casey strongly disapproved of.

gross lack of humanity combined with political aspirations aiming too high to enhance people's lives. Unlike Yeats, who gave tribute to the rebels of the Rising in his poem "Easter 1916,"

> O'Casey despises such heroics as boyscoutish vanity and he mocks the obsession with swords and uniforms as the decadent vanity of self-deceiving men. While Yeats lists the names of the warrior dead, O'Casey worries about the nameless civilian casualties. Where Yeats salutes the heroism of the rebels – while, of course, questioning the necessity – O'Casey goes farther and questions the whole idea of a hero. (Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland* 224)

In O'Casey's Dublin trilogy, heroism and heroic deeds are seen to cause misery rather than to enhance a character's happiness. The various political deaths prove to be utterly senseless and indeed present the world in a state of complete 'chassis' where people's values are turned upside down. Ironically enough, a sense of belonging and community can be glimpsed in O'Casey when the private realm is invaded and completely destroyed by the public sphere and when acute suffering occurs. Characters who are terminally ill or in a state of dying, such as Johnny in *Juno and the Paycock* and Nora in *The Plough and the Stars*, are suddenly granted privacy, and in fact, some private space of their own. After the birth of her stillborn child, Nora suffers a mental breakdown. Her behaviour henceforth strongly reminds the reader of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* when Ophelia staggers across the stage, mumbling in madness and despair. All of a sudden, the inhabitants of the tenement sympathise with Nora, whose state of health has deteriorated, and they share her pain and desperation. For the first time, they function as a caring community treating Nora like their sick relative. For example, Bessie Burgess, having been introduced in the first two acts as a fervent Protestant loyalist opposed to any political action taken by the Irish Catholics, puts Nora back to bed in a truly private room of her own (off-stage) whenever she re-appears on stage. Stumbling across the stage, Nora is looking for her stillborn child, whom they have taken away from her. Moreover, she is awaiting the return of her husband, who is fighting for the Irish cause in the Easter Rising and is eventually killed. As "the rebellion is the enemy of family life," Nora's miscarriage parallels the failed political enterprise of the Irish rebels (Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland* 236). In Yeats' words, "[a] terrible beauty" was born by the Easter Rising, causing primarily pain and misery to the direct relatives of the fighters rather than producing heroes in their eyes (*Yeats's Poems* 287, l.16, l.40 and l.80). Empathising with Nora – much to her family and friends' surprise – Bessie Burgess becomes one of the most fascinating and changeable characters in the course of the play. In the end, however, by presenting her in an unfavourable light, O'Casey does not make her a heroic figure. In fact, this

sudden turn signals his deep discomfort with the concept of heroism. When Nora runs towards the window to look for her husband, Bessie tries to pull her back from this acute zone of danger. Failing to do so in time, Bessie herself is hit by a bullet. Her body language and her exclamation do not only underline the shock but also the ambivalence of her feelings towards Nora and the Irish:

> *With a great effort Bessie pushes Nora away from the window, the force used causing her to stagger against it herself. Two rifle shots ring out in quick succession. Bessie jerks her body convulsively; stands stiffly for a moment, a look of agonised astonishment on her face, then she staggers forward, leaning heavily on the table with her hands.*
>
> BESSIE. (*With an arrested scream of fear and pain*) Merciful God, I'm shot, I'm shot, I'm shot, I'm shot! … Th' life's pourin' out o' me! (*To Nora*) I've got this through … through you … through you, you bitch you! … O God, have mercy on me! … (*To Nora*) You wouldn't stop quiet, no, you wouldn't, you wouldn't, blast you! Look at what I'm afther getting', look at what I'm afther getting' … I'm bleedin' to death, an' no one's here to stop th' flowin' blood!
>
> […]
>
> BESSIE. (*moaningly*) This is what's afther comin' on me for nursin' you day an' night … I was a fool, a fool, a fool! Get me a dhrink o' wather, you jade, will you? There's a fire burnin' in me blood! (*The Plough and the Stars* 157–158)

The sense of tragedy is increased by Nora, who is too frightened and mentally confused to act appropriately and even fails to hold Bessie's hand when asked to do so. She simply stands there watching Bessie Burgess die and waiting for Mrs Gogan, another neighbour, to cover her. Mrs Gogan's comment, "My God, she's as cold as death. They're after murdherin' th' poor inoffensive woman," is very much along O'Casey's line of disregarding war and rebellion in general (159). In the final scene of the play, this point of view is made even more explicit: just after the two soldiers have killed Bessie Burgess by accident, they are introduced as having no ethics or morals whatsoever. As they enter the room where the dead victim is lying on the floor, they are shocked for a short moment when they realise that they have just killed an innocent civilian. Then they sit down casually beside the dead body to enjoy breakfast:

> CORPORAL STODDART. (*who has been looking around, to Sergeant Tinley)* Tea here, Sergeant. Wot abaht a cup of scald?
>
> SERGEANT TINLEY. Pour it aht, Stoddart, pour it aht. I could scoff hanything just now. (160)

These two soldiers, representatives of those in favour of 'heroic' deeds for nationalist goals, clearly indicate that, in O'Casey's view, radical social changes and the establishment of true ethic values should have preceded political

movements in Ireland. In the Dublin trilogy, freedom fighters and soldiers invariably fail to act as responsible characters and thus to serve as new, inspiring images of the Irish population. With regard to their ambitious aims for the good of the country, the character traits outlined in these figures are shown to be rather unflattering.

Seamus Deane's *Reading in the Dark* and Frank McCourt's *Angela's Ashes: A Memoir of a Childhood*, two particularly successful examples of Anglo-Irish autobiographical texts, published in the 1990s, evoke an equally grim and unappealing image of Ireland at the beginning of the twentieth century. In each of these two novels, the narrator offers a personal account of his childhood in order to underline that his private truth does not match the public point of view.[20] In fact, certain aspects of the narrators' private truths and realities are just as ugly and unbecoming as the two soldiers' behaviour described in O'Casey's play *The Plough and the Stars*. As in O'Casey's Dublin trilogy, intimacy and trust between the different characters are difficult concepts in the families described in Deane's and McCourt's texts. In her study *Anglo-Irish Autobiography: Class, Gender and the Forms of Narrative*, Grubgeld stresses that "from James Joyce to Edna O'Brien and Frank McCourt, childhood is a terror-ridden period of repression, guilt and disillusionment" (20). Thus, Anglo-Irish autobiographical accounts are full of dysfunctional families and "Gothic motifs to express the sense of being haunted by ancestral guilt and family secrets" (86).

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20 Seamus Deane won the 1996 *Guardian* Fiction Prize, the *Irish Times* International Fiction Prize 1997, as well as the Irish Literature Prize 1997 for his autobiography *Reading in the Dark*, while Frank McCourt was awarded the 1997 Pulitzer Prize, the National Book Critics' Circle Award and the *Los Angeles Times* Award for the description of his childhood in *Angela's Ashes: A Memoir of a Childhood*.

In *Selected Twentieth Century Anglo-Irish Autobiographies: Theory and Patterns of Self-Representations* Wally defines memoirs as pivoting "around the subject's outer career, thus showing it in the accomplishment of social roles," while "autobiographies focus on the subject's inner life" documenting "[t]he protagonist's inner conflict, anguish and anxiety, his or her attempt to find and establish an identity" (33). Typically, in autobiographies "the outer environment features only in so far as it is connected to the *I*'s development" (33, original emphasis). Nevertheless, with regard to the special situation in Ireland, Kenneally indicates that "most of the great twentieth century literary self-portraits overlap in their reference to major political and social changes which occurred in Ireland during the 1890s to 1920s" (111). "Owing to the highly politicised environment in which Anglo-Irish autobiographies were produced" and recognising that "[a]t the heart of many Anglo-Irish self-accounts lies the attempt to integrate the traumatic establishment of the Irish Free State (and all that it entailed) into the subject's life," Wally agrees that in the Irish context a distinction between memoirs and autobiography seems "pointless" (34). Thus, due to the complex entanglement of politics and private life, I will follow Kenneally and Wally's argument and use the term *autobiography* to refer to Deane's and McCourt's texts.

Therefore, contrary to O'Casey's plays where the Irish society represented by the slum-dwellers of a tenement is portrayed and criticised, the focal point in these narratives is on the narrators' domestic space. *Home* and *family* as well as the fabrication of identity through the writing process, therefore, play a major role. Obviously, in autobiographies, the main purpose is not to discuss the power structures within society or their impact on the narrator's private life but to reconsider or reconstruct one's childhood by means of language in order to "explain the self to the self" (Kenneally 113). "Self-explanation, self-justification, self-disclosure and self-expressions" are, therefore, identified as some of the main aims of an auto-biographer when constructing and interpreting versions of one's former *self* (119). Nevertheless, in his article on "Autobiography and Memoirs 1890–1988," Deane explains that

> [a]utobiography is not just concerned with the self; it is also concerned with the 'other,' the person or persons, events or places, that have helped to give the self definition. […] [A]uthors […] are seeking, through personal experience, self-examination, reconsideration of historical events and circumstances, to identify the other force, the hostile or liberating energy, which made the self come into consciousness and thereby give to existence a pattern or the beginnings of a pattern of explanation. (380)

Drawing attention to the crucial role of language in shaping or inventing reality, Wally, quite generally, argues that "[a]utobiography is a construct of a construct in the sense that the narrative is as much constructed as its point of origin, the individual" (29). Hughes refers to the same phenomenon when she quotes Marcus saying that "[t]he 'I' that appears in the autobiographical text […] is both pre-existent and constructed" (13). Thus, it has to be stressed that there is a strong fictional and in many cases even meta-fictional element in autobiographical texts. To some extent, the actual text creates reality, and by publishing his own story, the narrator is finally enabled "to break down the barriers of personal isolation, to liberate [himself] from the restrictive silences of self-consciousness" (Kenneally 119). By being able to articulate what remained silent in his real past, the narrator is given the opportunity to express himself and oppose dominant discourse as well as public truth.

The first-person narrator in *Reading in the Dark* offers a lyrical description of his family history in the north of Ireland, which differs considerably from what is regarded as the official and public truth. However, as the narrator shares the knowledge of the 'complete truth' about his family history only with his mother and late grandfather, more than one truth exists within the community as well as within the family. Each member of the household acts and suffers depending on how much he or she knows about the shame and agony brought on the family by a "long, silent feud" (*Reading* 43). This

phenomenon of being more or less informed of the events in the family history could be described as a special instance of discrepant awareness. Intrigued by the story surrounding his family from an early age, the narrator slowly comes to unveil the disastrous secret. He soon senses that the 'true' story of the feud circles around the disturbing fact that "[his] mother's father had [his] father's brother killed" (187). In 1922, the narrator's grandfather believes that Eddie, a young man vaguely linked to the IRA like himself, has betrayed the Catholic minority to the police. Unknown to any member of his family, he orders Eddie's execution. However, the grandfather is mistaken. His daughter, the narrator's mother, knows that the real informer is her boyfriend Tony McIlhenny. When Tony leaves her in 1926 to marry her own sister Kate, the narrator's mother takes revenge on her former boyfriend and reveals his true identity to her father. Upon realising his mistake, the grandfather forces Tony to flee the country and thus to abandon his pregnant wife Kate. Entirely unaware of the unholy connection between the two families, the narrator's mother, on the other hand, eventually marries Eddie's brother. On his deathbed, the grandfather, ashamed of the mistake he made years ago, confesses the truth to his daughter. As a result of the disturbing news, the narrator's mother suffers a physical and mental breakdown. She completely withdraws from the family, exemplifying an extreme form of Sofsky's claim that the wall "provides distance and protects against attacks" (23). Perceiving her own family as hostile or hazardous, her mind becomes a private space to which no one else has access. She no longer participates in family life and stops sharing privacy with anyone. Although she partially recovers after a year, the piece of private truth that her father unveiled to her before he died remains such a blow that it leaves her haunted for the rest of her life.[21]

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[21] In his chapter "Big Mistakes in Small Places: Exterior and Interior Space in Seamus Deane's *Reading in the Dark*" in *Space and the Irish Cultural Imagination*, Smyth offers an outstanding reading of the "complex set of spatial coordinates" in Deane's text (136). Using Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space* and Heidegger's philosophical thoughts on homelessness and alienation as a starting point for his textual analysis of Deane's autobiographical account, the author closely examines the implications which the general setting Derry has, spells out his "historical and political associations" with the hillfort Grianán of Aileach, comments on the symbolic value of borders and bridges in the text and finally focuses on the house as intimate human space (140). He calls the image of the window "particularly revealing" because it "offers a suitable space for a ghostly presence caught between past and present, between openness and closure," and he concludes that, indeed, "the narrator of *Reading in the Dark* finds himself increasingly caught between discourses of openness and closure, interiority and exteriority" (156). Indicating that "a complex geography of 'outside' and 'inside' appears to be deeply embedded in the human psyche," Smyth rightly points out that "*Reading in the Dark* rehearses this geography at a number of levels, and [that] part of its impact as a narrative lies in its own exquisite blend of the fears and desires associated with these imaginative locations" (157).

Having observed how his mother hurriedly leaves his grandfather's house after her father has shared his secret with her, the narrator gradually finds the missing clues in the story and manages to grasp the different shades of the "convoluted family saga" (Smyth 134). When the narrator indicates to his mother that he has come to understand the details of his family history and now shares this secret with her, his mother is terrified; she fails to realise that the knowledge her son has gained is too painful for him to share even with the other members of the family. Instead of having a uniting effect and creating a strong bond between the two family members, this private knowledge separates mother and son, underlining that at times "[t]he history of private life is also a history of various kinds of fear" (Prost 173). In addition to being afflicted with shame and grief, the narrator's mother fears that the truth of her secret might be revealed both publicly and within the family. Tormented by her son's knowledge, she turns vividly against him, treats him in a "hostile" manner and keeps up "a low-intensity warfare" towards him (*Reading* 215). Having been asked about her birthday wish, she admits that his presence prevents her from finally burying the past. As a sign of her desperation, she begs him to leave the house for good:

> 'Just for that day,' she answered, 'just for that one day, the seventeenth of May, to forget everything. Or at least not to be reminded of it. Can you give me that?'
> I didn't reply.
> 'Why don't you go away?' she asked me. 'Then maybe I could look after your father properly for once, without your eyes on me.'
> I told her I would. I'd go away, after university. That would be her birthday gift, that promise. She nodded. I moved away just as she put out her hand towards me. (224)

This scene once more highlights how shared private knowledge need not necessarily increase the sense of intimacy between people. The mother would have much preferred her son not to know her secret in order to keep the power to share this knowledge in her own hands. The narrator's longing to know the secret and his mother's utter distress and anguish as he succeeds illustrate Vincent's conviction that "[t]he idea of secrecy is intolerable to the person excluded. But a secret may also be intolerable to the one who possesses it" (163–164). The first-person narrator also pays a heavy price for gaining insight into the family history as a result of witnessing how his mother left the house after his grandfather had talked to her before his death: "I left him [i. e. the grandfather] and went straight home, home, where I could never talk to my father or my mother properly again" (*Reading* 126). After all, "knowing what I did separated me from them both" (187).

The book claims that what the public alleges to be the truth is only the official version of what happened and should mainly be seen as a manifestation

of power by the dominant (Protestant) forces in town. However, this account has little in common with reality and the private truths of those characters who were directly involved in the events. As long as the narrator remains silent, some people in town believe that his uncle Eddie was a member of the IRA and that he left for the States, while others are convinced that he was shot by the police once it had become publicly known that he was an informer. The truth, however, which is kept silent by the narrator, his mother and his grandfather, remains sealed and therefore non-existent. Before he succeeds in breaking the heavy silence surrounding the feud, the narrator is possessed by the idea of knowing what happened and he longs for the father to break his silence to voice his personal view of what he thinks happened to Eddie. He learns that "[so] broken was my father's family that it felt to me like a catastrophe you could live with only if you kept it quiet, let it die down of its own accord like a dangerous fire" (42–43). Unlike his mother and father, who for different reasons each seem "paralysed by shame," the first-person narrator cannot bear the silence (223). On the one hand, he feels a strong urge to articulate and disclose the truth; on the other hand, however, it does not feel right to inform the other members of the family against his mother's will.

His final solution to the dilemma directly links him to the people described in *The Poems of the Dispossessed*. The narrator withdraws to a space which he knows his father does not have access to. He translates everything he knows about this "curse a family can never shake off" into Irish and burns the original English version as soon as he has finished his translation (*Reading* 66). Then, one evening, pretending to do his homework, the narrator reads the entire family saga to his father who is no longer fluent in Irish:

> It was an essay we had been assigned in school, I told him, on local history. He just nodded and smiled and said it sounded wonderful. My mother had listened carefully. I knew she knew what I was doing. My father tapped me on the shoulder and said he liked to hear the language spoken in the house. (195)

This act of sharing the secret, knowing that the father will fail to understand the message, temporarily allows the narrator to fulfil both his own and his mother's needs. The narrator feels the sense of "relief" which Vincent indirectly hints at when he talks about the possibility of revealing the truth to someone in order to counter the unease people may experience when they are in possession of a secret (164).

After his parents' death, the narrator is finally able to tell the truth about his family history, and writing his autobiography becomes a way for him to cope with the deeply troublesome secret he had kept to himself for so many years in order to remain loyal to his mother. Hence, the autobiographical account of the first-person narrator's childhood turns into a rehabilitation of his uncle

Eddie. At the same time, however, the writing process, similar to his translation of the story into Irish as a young boy, serves as a healing process for the narrator, as a means of liberation releasing the pressure "swollen inside" him for so long (*Reading* 194).

In the autobiography by McCourt, Frank, the narrator of *Angela's Ashes*, paints a very private and at times cynical picture of his immensely disturbing and "miserable Irish Catholic childhood" in Limerick (1). Throughout the narrator's childhood and early teenage years described in the text, the family suffers from ineffable poverty and constantly borders on starvation. Malnutrition and pneumonia actually kill three of the narrator's younger siblings, while Frank himself has to be hospitalised at one stage. Diagnosed with typhoid fever, he is lucky to survive. In addition to these hardships, he and his younger brother, Malachy, are often faced with discrimination and racism because their father is originally from the north and the two boys, who were born and spent the first few years of their lives in New York, have an American accent when the family first arrives in Limerick. Stressing the bleak, sombre atmosphere and the lack of comforts experienced in the city in the private account of his childhood, the narrator exposes the hardship and deprivation he and his family endure and clearly identifies the different forces responsible for the horrible conditions they live in:

> When I look back on my childhood I wonder how I survived at all. […] People everywhere brag and whimper about the woes of their early years, but nothing can compare with the Irish version: the poverty; the shiftless loquacious alcoholic father; the pious defeated mother moaning by the fire; pompous priests; bullying schoolmasters; the English and the terrible things they did to us for eight hundred long years. (1)

Retelling or reinventing episodes from his own childhood by exploring memories of his "private subjective [reality]," the narrator seems aware that the point of view chosen in his autobiographical account is hardly compatible with public discourse (Kenneally 116). In fact, *Angela's Ashes* serves as a typical example of an Anglo-Irish autobiography where, according to Wally, "traumatising events of Irish history are extensively treated […] in order to alter, rectify or add to the already established historiographic discourse" (140). As my reading of Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* will show, the criticism expressed in *Angela's Ashes* recalls Stephen Dedalus' uncompromising separation and renunciation of the different power institutions – namely the family, the nation and the church – in Irish society.[22]

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[22] Joyce's use of space and his criticism of the different centres of power are discussed in Chapter III (p. 70–83).

The narrator in *Angela's Ashes* illustrates that the nationalist movement aimed at decolonising Ireland by freeing it from English rule and influence. However, he stresses that, during his upbringing in the Irish Free State, the same mechanisms of power and control were used by the nationalists and the Irish Catholic Church.

Frank accuses the institutions in power of harshness and argues that for ordinary people nothing changed after the foundation of the republic. In fact, whenever his nationalist father – deeply afflicted with the Irish problem, 'the drink,' as the narrator calls it – returns home from wasting the family's entire weekly wages in a single night at the pub, singing songs of Roddy McCorley and Kevin Barry, he makes the narrator and his younger brothers promise to die for Ireland. Priests, on the other hand, repeatedly declare what "a glorious thing [it is] to die for the Faith," finally causing the young boy to wonder if anyone ever cares about his well-being, about how to make life worth living, and amidst the misery he finds himself in and the numerous childhood deaths in the family, about how to survive in this country (*Angela's Ashes* 124). School is another institution largely failing to enhance a young boy's possibilities. Teaching takes the form of Catholic catechism; the students' first and foremost task is to repeat exactly what the master says. This manifestation of power once again highlights that independent minds are unwelcome and almost invariably lead to trouble. A young boy in Frank's class who requires an explanation of the Catholic concept of 'sanctifying grace,' is strongly advised by the master not to interrogate or probe him: "There are too many people wandering the world asking questions and that's what has us in the state we're in and if I find any boy in this class asking questions I won't be responsible for what happens" (130). The only exception in Frank's school career is Mr O'Halloran, the headmaster of the school, who encourages individual thinking among his students:

> You have to study and learn so that you can make up your own mind about history and everything else but you can't make up an empty mind. Stock your mind, stock your mind. It is your house of treasure and no one in the world can interfere with it. If you won the Irish Sweepstakes and bought a house that needed furniture would you fill it with bits and pieces of rubbish? Your mind is your house and if you fill it with rubbish from the cinemas it will rot in your head. You might be poor, your shoes might be broken, but your mind is a palace. (236–237)

In fact, the autobiographical account of the early years of his life seems to be the narrator's actual process 'of making up his own mind' about his youth in the west of Ireland. Again the cathartic aspect of the narrative process has to be emphasised. By publishing the story of his childhood, Frank identifies the groups responsible for repressing and dispossessing parts of the population in the same way that the British occupiers had done before them.

Frank's private message is that life at the time was desperate and, in opposition to the public point of view, his text indicates that circumstances could have been different if power had not been abused. Moreover, the misery might have been alleviated had steps been taken once the problem was recognised. As his father is on the dole during most of Frank's early childhood, the family receives some support from the St. Vincent de Paul Society. In order to decide whether the family is indeed entitled to the food they are given, two representatives come to visit them in their home. As the two men are led to the upper floor of their house, they are "careful the way they step into the lake in the kitchen" downstairs (113). To avoid the water and the dampness of this room during winter, the family have withdrawn to the upper part of the house, which they have begun to refer to as 'Italy.' The narrator witnesses how amused the two men are by Malachy's pride of 'living in Italy,' shaking their heads as they leave the family saying "God Almighty and Mother of God, this is desperate. That's not Italy they have upstairs, that's Calcutta" (114). Thus, although the narrator originally suggests that in his opinion "nothing can compare with the Irish version" of childhood, the comment by these two men reveals a condescending, colonial attitude towards India, the only place in the world one would expect to be in as bad a state as Ireland (1). Another reference to India is made when Frank's father goes to the Town Hall to complain that their home is badly afflicted with flies and rats because the only lavatory of the lane is situated directly next to the entrance of their house. As a result of the dominant role which religion plays in the country, Frank's father calls for different standards than those in India:

> Dad says: This is not India. This is a Christian Country. The lane needs more lavatories. The man says, Do you expect Limerick to start building lavatories in houses that are falling down anyway, that will be demolished after the war? Dad says that lavatory could kill us all. The man says we live in dangerous times. (241–242)

When the harsh and cynical public voice represented by the civil servant in the Town Hall is taken into consideration, it comes as no surprise that no remedy is taken. This short episode highlights the private truth that voices and realities of slum-dwellers are neither respected nor valued in the society depicted.

Moreover, a comment made by a neighbour of the McCourt family underlines how successful the teachings of the Catholic Church have been in inducing a feeling of guilt in people as soon as someone dares speak the (private) truth. One day, when drinking tea with her neighbour Bridey, Frank's mother Angela mentions that she does not know "under God" how to cope with the little amount of money they have (162). When the neighbour praises God, Angela declares that she is convinced that "God is good for someone somewhere but He hasn't been seen lately in the lanes of Limerick" (162). Although Bridey

laughs, she reminds Frank's mother that for such an ungrateful comment "you could go to hell" (162). Referring to her personal experience and truth, Angela quips: "Aren't I there already, Bridey?" (162) The moral teachings of the church fail to silence Frank's agonised and desperate mother – she has reached a stage where the truth is no longer repressed by shame, guilt or fear.

In the private response to his childhood years, not only does the narrator pass judgement on the various power institutions in Ireland, but he also reflects on family life and its dysfunctional aspects. He meticulously describes his father's drunkenness and the effects the father's addiction has on the entire family; nonetheless, the narrator never rebukes his father. His father's manners are presented as a reality Frank simply grows up with. Still, through Frank's detailed portrayal, secret and hidden pieces of family life are revealed. Despite "a lack of tea or bread in the house," the father always finds ways to finance his pints (153), even if this means, in the opinion of the narrator's mother, going "beyond the beyonds," by drinking the money which the narrator's grandfather in the North sent after a new baby is born (210). Without directly blaming either of his parents, the narrator emphasises that no matter how broke the family might be, mother and father "always manage to get the fags, the Wild Woodbines. They have to have the Woodbines in the morning and anytime they drink tea. They tell us every day we should never smoke, it's bad for your lungs, it's bad for your chest, it stunts your growth, and they sit by the fire puffing away" (153).

The family's deprivation more often than not goes hand in hand with a lack of intimacy and kindness amongst the different members of the family. As in Sean O'Casey's plays where no strong bonding between the members of a family exists, social pressure and demeanour are identified as two sources of disagreement and unease spreading within the family and undermining the care and love with which the parents treat their children. Thus, regardless of the fact that the members of this community do not live in tenements, social condensation among them is still strong. Inhabiting houses in the same lane means that this community is representative of a society, as described by Sofsky, where the different members of a community all participate in each other's private lives witnessing their neighbours' ups and downs:

> Where everyone knows everyone else, privacy can scarcely be maintained. The more closely woven the social network is, the more oppressive the proximity of others. Conversely, the more loopholes there are in the social network, the greater the individual's freedom. So long as people live in closed groups with strong ties, in a remote village […] their relationships are close and manageable. However, established groups and outsiders pay for this closeness with a loss of freedom. A change in one's social group seems impossible. Being completely integrated means being bound by social fetters. Nothing is hidden from the attention of neighbors, the clan, or the

> community. Everything private is public. Every offense against customs and etiquette is immediately noted. (31–32)

As a consequence of the constant observation by others, interaction between the parents in *Angela's Ashes* is often characterised by harsh undertones. The father is constantly afraid of being disgraced or feeling ashamed in front of the neighbours, especially when his wife accepts charity from organisations or begs a shop-owner for a Christmas meal. Anxious to preserve a sense of dignity in life, he is careful never to swear in front of the children. The mother, on the other hand, feels primarily disgraced by her husband's drinking problem and his inability to support the family financially. While some families in the lane anxiously await the arrival of the telegram boys delivering the weekly earnings which the fathers send from England during the war, others are less lucky:

> The families that get the early telegrams have that contented look. They'll have all day Saturday to enjoy the money. They'll shop, they'll eat, they'll have all day to think about what they'll do that night [...]. There are families don't get the telegram every week and you know them by the anxious look. (*Angela's Ashes* 253–254)

Much to the narrator and his family's shame and humiliation, as this weekly ritual is followed by the keen eyes of the entire community surrounding them, the telegram boys – except for the odd time – normally bypass their house.

At times, the atmosphere between the parents becomes so tense that communication between them breaks down entirely, and Frank understands that one should not disrespect the powerful and reproachful silence. In a very innocent manner, the young narrator explains that such silence is no reason to worry; lack of communication, rows and shame are perfectly representative of the community in Limerick in general:

> People in families in the lanes of Limerick have their ways of not talking to each other and it takes years of practice. There are people who don't talk to each other because their fathers were on opposite sides in the Civil War in 1922. [...] There are families that are ashamed of themselves because their forefathers gave up their religion for the sake of a bowl of Protestant soup during the Famine and those families are known ever after as soupers. [...] In every lane, there's always someone not talking to someone or everyone not talking to someone or someone not talking to everyone. (146–147)

Hence, although the reasons given for a lack of communication and silence in the two autobiographies differ considerably, inarticulateness is yet again a key characteristic of the disadvantaged Irish minority. The writing process, however, allows the first-person narrators in *Reading in the Dark* as well as in *Angela's Ashes* to move beyond the muteness of their childhoods. It provides them with an opportunity to construct their own *self* and identity retro-

spectively and to move beyond the restricting rules that govern the communities they were born into.

3. Yeats, Joyce and Beckett: Towards a New Self-Conception

Contrary to writers such as Synge or O'Casey, William Butler Yeats' objective at the beginning of his career was not primarily to offer a realistic and authentic account of Irish life. He aimed at restoring elements of the Old Gaelic order and at reviving Ireland's "disregarded past or a set of disinherited values" in order to embed the cultural heritage in the present and, in a second step, to transform the country's future (Webb xxxiii). In an article on national drama, Yeats explained what he believed to be the function of space, legends and folklore in Ireland's cultural heritage:

> Our legends are always associated with places, and not merely every mountain and valley, but every strange stone and little coppice has its legend, preserved in written or unwritten tradition. Our Irish romantic movement has arisen out of this tradition, and should always, even when it makes new legends about traditional people and things, be haunted by places. It should make Ireland, as Ireland and all other lands were in ancient times, a holy land to her own people. ("Literary Ideals in Ireland" 958)

Place, in this broad definition of the word, plays a predominant role in Yeats' poetry. Despising early modern(ist) England and everything that it stood for, Yeats turned towards the place of his own childhood, the Sligo landscapes, to rediscover its rich but nearly forgotten culture, and he transformed it into a dream-like paradise:

> Yeats associated England with everything he loathed about the modern world: with imperialism, with vulgar, godless materialism, with urban ugliness and squalor. Ireland, by contrast, appeared an unspoiled, beautiful place where people lived according to old-age traditions and held on to magical, time–honored beliefs. Ireland's remote western regions held special importance, not only because of Yeats's ties to Sligo but also because of the west's comparative isolation from the British influences that had more powerfully affected the populous and accessible east. Although the west had been ravaged by the famines of the 1840s (and thus marked by the catastrophic effects of British neglect), many of its people still spoke Irish, and many more preserved distinctively Irish stories and values. By his early twenties Yeats was searching for the answers to his spiritual and political questions in the folk beliefs of Ireland's western country people and in the heroic myths of the whole island's ancient Gaelic culture. These traditions, he felt, preserved satisfying ways of life and eternal spiritual truths that had been forgotten in modernized places like England and that were threatened, even in Ireland, by the encroachment of British culture. (Holdeman 6–7)

In other words, hundreds of years after the Irish had been deprived of their land and – as Fear Dorcha Ó Mealláin recounted in his poem "Exodus to Connacht" – had been forced to leave their home to resettle in Connacht as a punishment, Yeats identified precisely this part of Ireland as the most traditional and authentic. He did not believe that true Irishness was experienced directly in this area, but that a representation of the Irish before the British influence could be observed, recaptured and eventually turned into public knowledge once more. For him, the Sligo landscapes bore the potential of *reviving* Irish culture and allowing people to come into contact "with an idea or a sometimes vague impression of what Ireland ought to be in order to meet certain undefined but intuitively sensed spiritual needs" (McKenna 421).[23] McKenna further argued that the writers of the Literary Revival

> created an imaginative, bucolic retreat populated by figures of rather unreal romance and myth who had a strong and direct connection not only with the mythic past, not only with a fecund and mysterious landscape alive with preternatural possibilities, but with the deep meaning and purposefulness endemic to that past and to those landscapes, a meaning and purposefulness that eluded the industrial societies of the mid-to-late eighteenth century. (421)

In "The Lake Isle of Innisfree," Yeats combines romantic and modernist elements and images, but he clearly favours the romantic notion. In an urban environment surrounded by "pavements grey" (*W.B. Yeats: The Poems* 60, l.11), typical of modernist texts, the poet yearns for his past in Innisfree, constantly hearing the dropping water "in the deep heart's core" (l.12).[24] Dreaming of

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[23] The *Irish Literary Revival* is "a term used to describe the modern Irish literary movement, lasting from around 1890 […] to about 1922, a date marking the end of the Anglo-Irish War and the publication of *Ulysses*" ("Literary Revival" 311). In the early 1890s, William Butler Yeats hoped to replace the political movement in Ireland centring round a land reform by a cultural one, reviving Irish legend and folklore. Douglas Hyde, another key figure of this movement, "restated Thomas Davis's notion that there was an indissoluble link between a nation's language and its culture, and argued for the preservation and revival of the Irish language and Irish customs, claiming that it was a sign of cultural weakness to mimic English ways and habits of thoughts" (312). Consequently, Gaelic mythological figures played a major role in their writings; in fact, the heroic figure, Cú Chulainn, became "the dominant fictional figure of the revival" and was seen as "the embodiment of the heroic nationalism" (313). The renewed interest in Gaelic literature, language and culture, by people such as William Butler Yeats, Lady Gregory, James O'Grady, Douglas Hyde, and George Moore, also led to the foundation of the Abbey Theatre. However, politics and culture cannot easily be kept apart during the Irish Literary Revival. After the Easter Rising in 1916, for instance, Yeats wondered "'Did that play of mine send out / Certain men the English shot?', referring to *Cathleen Ni Houlihan* (1902), a play which had Maud Gonne in the title-role, embodying nationalist intensity" (313).

[24] In her "Introduction" to *The Cambridge Companion to W.B. Yeats*, Howes claims that Yeats, who was "[b]orn in 1865, […] produced works that arguably belong to each of three major

peace, tranquillity and simplicity in this Arcadian landscape, which now only exists in his mind, the poet finally exclaims, in stanza one and three, "I will arise now and go" (l.1 and 9) to settle in "a small cabin" (l.2) and live on honey and beans (l.3). Yeats thus shifted his notion of how (Irish) society should ideally be ruled into places like Innisfree or the Gaelic utopian land of the forever young, Tír na nÓg. While Synge moved the periphery from the Irish mainland to the Aran Islands so that the Irish mainland served as the new centre, Yeats announced the death of the colonial system. England stopped being the sole focus of the Irish. In Yeats' texts, the colonised were undergoing a process of emancipation and they were speaking for themselves.

Although Oisín, the hero of Yeats' first longer poem, "The Wanderings of Oisín," lives in the utopian land of Tír na nÓg for over 300 years and spends these three centuries dancing, feasting and fighting a demon together with his wife, the fairy princess Niamh, he still considers Ireland his true home. Despite the gaiety on the island, in his dreams, he is constantly reminded of the Irish past and he finally admits his longing for the Fenians, his mortal Irish friends:

> But in dreams, mild man of the croziers, driving the dust with their throngs,
> Moved round me, of seamen or landsmen, all who are winter tales;
> Came by me the kings of the Red Branch, with roaring of laughter and songs,
> Or moved as they moved once, love-making or piercing the tempest with sails.
> [...]
> And by me, in soft red raiment, the Fenians moved in long streams,
> And Grania, walking and smiling, sewed with her needle of bone.
> So I lived and lived not, so wrought I and wrought not, with creatures of dreams.
> In a long iron sleep, as a fish in the water goes dumb as a stone.
>
> (*W.B. Yeats: The Poems* 24–25, l.85–88 and l.93–96)

As a remedy to his depression, Oisín begs Niamh to allow him to revisit his former home. Tragically, the journey home is a journey towards his own death. Having promised Niamh not to touch Irish soil, he falls from his horse as he tries to help two people who are carrying a sack full of sand (26, l.125–128, and 30, l.185–192). Dying, he begs Saint Patrick, to whom he has confessed the story of his life in the poem, for help in reuniting with the Fenians and reviving their forgotten deeds and songs:

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literary historical periods or traditions: the Romantic, the Victorian and the Modernist" (1). Yeats has often been regarded as one of the last romantics because he detested anything that was related to Modernism. And yet, "the ways in which he remade his poetics during his middle and late periods gave him much in common with Modernism" (Howes 9). The three essays "Yeats and Romanticism," "Yeats, Victorianism and the 1890s" and "Yeats and Modernism" in *The Cambridge Companion to W.B. Yeats* offer a detailed discussion of Yeats' indebtedness to each of the three literary movements.

> Put the staff in my hands; for I go to the Fenians, O cleric, to chaunt
> The war-songs that roused them of old; they will rise, making clouds with their breath,
> Innumerable, singing, exultant; the clay underneath them shall pant,
> And demons be broken in pieces, and trampled beneath them in death.
> […]
> We will tear out the flaming stones, and batter the gateway of brass
> And enter, and none sayeth 'No' when there enters the strongly armed guest;
> Make clean as broom cleans, and march on as oxen move over young grass;
> Then feast, making converse of wars, and of old wounds, and turn to our rest.
> […]
> It were sad to gaze on the blessèd and no man I loved of old there;
> I throw down the chain of small stones! when life in my body has ceased,
> I will go to Caoilte, and Conan, and Bran, Sceolan, Lomair,
> And dwell in the house of the Fenians, be they in flames or at feast.
>
> (31, l.201–204 and l. 209–212, and 32, l.221–224)

Similarly to the hero of his poem, Yeats urged a national revival of the old myths and legends to transform this knowledge of the country, which was kept privately by a few, into something new and powerful for the public. In a period, "[a]fter the fall of Charles Stewart Parnell in 1891, when he and others dreamed unrealistically of a radical transfer of nationalist energies from the political to cultural spheres, Yeats hoped to fill an apparent political vacuum with cultural work" (Allison 185).[25] He craved for a cultural 'remembrance of Ireland's future' and hoped to mentally free the country from English colonisation. Having been fascinated by Irish myths from an early age, Yeats had begun to collect these narratives when he was in his teens. He later published numerous Irish legends and fairy tales perceiving these texts as a very distinct trait of the Irish character. Moreover, Pethica notes that these narratives and tales answered his deep interest in the occult and spiritual world:

> Folklore and legend offered him subject matter that contrasted sharply with the orthodoxies and concerns of the contemporary urban world, but that he was able to claim as distinctively Irish and draw on in creating master-myths of Irish nationality. As a storehouse of uncanny phenomena, ancient wisdom expressed in metaphorical or allegorical forms, and traditional models of story-telling, folklore appealed to him on occult, philosophical, and literary grounds. Heroic legend likewise attracted him both

[25] Charles Stewart Parnell (1846–1891) became the Irish national leader in 1879 and was elected as the leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party in 1880 ("Parnell" 465). He is generally thought to have come closest to a peaceful transition of English power towards a self-governed Irish state, the so-called 'Home Rule.' However, his "political career was destroyed by the party split that followed his citation as co-respondent in the O'Shea divorce petition of December 1889, and his failure to defend the action" (465–466). He married Katherine O'Shea in June 1891 and died the following October, having failed to complete his political ambitions and hopes (466).

> emotionally and intellectually, since he believed that only heroic action allowed the full expression of selfhood, and thus made possible the kind of passionate, heroic poetry he aspired to write. (129)

In 1898, Yeats' interpretation of the past and his concentration on Irish legends and fairy stories resulted in an extended controversy in the Dublin *Daily Express* with John Eglinton, a "literary controversialist" who worked at the National Library of Ireland between 1895 and 1921 ("Eglinton" 169). Eglinton disapproved of Yeats' literary efforts suggesting that the subject matters chosen by Yeats and other members of the Literary Revival "obstinately refuse to be taken up out of their old environment and be transplanted into the world of modern sympathies. The proper mode of treating them is a secret lost with the subjects themselves" ("What Should Be the Subjects" 957). Of course, Yeats strongly disagreed with Eglinton's conservative – and from a postmodern standpoint, petty – view. He offered various examples from other European literatures, such as Ibsen's *Peer Gynt* or Wagner's works, which had been adapted and reintegrated into modern literature. Nevertheless, the question whether – and if so how – old Irish legends and wisdom could be translated into the present and the future of the Irish public as well as into a more intricate, international experience was highly relevant. Thus, according to Crotty,

> [t]he writing of the period as a whole is characterised by a dialectic between idealisation of rural Ireland or of the national past, on the one hand, and aspiration towards a more complex, internationally alert and critical apprehension of Irish experience, on the other. (52)

At the beginning of Yeats' career, his immense efforts to revive the Irish cultural heritage were sharply contrasted by his avoidance of national politics. He is a typical representative of those Irish people who, as Kiberd highlights, "can only bear the *thought* of violence if it is committed elsewhere" or happened in the past ("Irish Literature" 290, original emphasis). However, in the aftermath of the events surrounding the Easter Rising in 1916, Yeats felt compelled to reconsider this stance. He was shocked by the outcome of the events, which he had objected to when they first occurred. Suddenly, politics and literature, and accordingly public and private issues, started to be mingled in his writing. While the first part of the poem "Easter 1916" encapsulates Yeats' personal experience and thoughts of the incidents as well as his relationship with the leaders of the Easter Rising, a public evaluation and meditation of these events is evoked in the second part (*Yeats's Poems* 287 – 289).

Even at a time of great political insecurity, Yeats' rendering of political events is more often than not merged, or in Freudian terms *condensed*, with

ancient traditions, beliefs and mythologies.[26] In his poem "The Second Coming," Yeats emphasises the fact that people have lost faith in the old order and have for this reason abolished it; the former centre has been eliminated. In spite of freeing themselves from earlier powers or influences, people, nonetheless, failed to establish a space of security, safety and happiness. The postcolonial world is thus primarily marked by the loss of innocence and the lack of order:

> Turning and turning in the widening gyre
> The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
> Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
> Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world. (*W.B. Yeats: The Poems* 235, l.1–4)

Emphasising the great void left behind as a result of the collapse of the colonial system, Yeats tried to fill this emptiness by withdrawing into symbolism in his later years. He repeatedly used the image of the tower and turned to ancient civilisations such as Byzantium for direction. The mystical element in his poetry, however, remained a dominant aspect throughout his career and kept playing a pivotal role in defining the characters' identity.

Yeats' shift in focus to Ireland exclusively foreshadows the ideas and the self-conscious positioning of James Joyce. Whereas many of the texts produced by Joyce's Anglo-Irish predecessors were addressed to England to define Ireland from within and to oppose colonial power, England only plays a minor role in Joyce's universe. His works *Dubliners* (1914), *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) and *Ulysses* (1922) are all set in the Irish capital and revolve around the lives and chores of Dublin characters in the years after Parnell's death in 1891 and before the Irish Declaration of Independence in 1922. Joyce, therefore, chose a setting when Dublin still belonged to the British Empire and when the influence of the Roman Catholic Church exceeded the religious field and considerably shaped the social and political life of the Irish population (Bulson 33). Joyce, himself, however, was rather critical of the colonial and the religious powers governing the country and he "blamed these two forces for Dublin's backwardness and inferiority" (33).

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[26] Laplanche and Pontalis define *condensation*, as it is used by Sigmund Freud in *Interpretation of Dreams*, as a mechanism which can be applied in various ways: "[S]ometimes one element (theme, person, etc.) is alone preserved because it occurs several times in different dream-thoughts ('nodal point'); alternatively, various elements may be combined into a disparate unity (as in the case of a composite figure); or again, the condensation of several images may result in the blurring of those traits which do not coincide so as to maintain and reinforce only those which are common" (83). Yeats uses the mechanism of condensation, for example, when he mixes ancient (Gaelic) thoughts with his personal experiences or with the contemporary Irish situation.

Watson argues that Joyce did not criticise the Roman Catholic Church primarily for its religious standpoints but "for what he designates as its social and historical role in Ireland" (*Irish Identity* 154). In his lecture "Ireland: Island of Saints and Sages," which he gave at the University of Trieste in 1907, Joyce questions the strong effort of the Irish people to bring about political change while completely accepting the authority of the church: "I confess that I do not see what good it does to fulminate against English tyranny while the tyranny of Rome still holds the dwelling place of the soul" (125). In Joyce's works, then, both the British Empire and the Roman Catholic Church are repeatedly presented as an "imperial power" and as a "mighty source for the inculcation of servility" from which the Irish desperately needed to free themselves (Watson, *Irish Identity* 154).

The novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* serves as an example of a character's liberation from the main political and religious powers at work in Ireland and from various constraints present in Dublin society as a result of the strong influence that these forces obtained at the time. The text exclusively centres round Stephen Dedalus' personal development from his early childhood to adolescence. At the beginning of the novel, Stephen, still a young boy, is allowed to dine with the older generation for the first time. He witnesses how the atmosphere of this festive event is spoilt by the fierce dispute of the adults over Parnell's fall. On the one hand, Stephen's father, Simon Dedalus, and Mr Casey, a fervent believer in nationalism, hold the Catholic Church in Ireland responsible for the final downfall of their "king" Parnell (*A Portrait* 41). Mr Casey strongly disagrees with the priests' intervening in political matters claiming that "[w]e go to the house of God [...] in all humility to pray to our Maker and not to hear election addresses" (32). On the other hand, Dante, a devout Catholic and blind follower of the Irish priests, defends the position of the religious leaders by saying: "It is a question of public morality. A priest would not be a priest if he did not tell his flock what is right and what is wrong" (32). For the Roman Catholic Church and consequently for herself, Parnell was "a public sinner" who "was no longer worthy to lead" (33). The argument between Dante and Mr Casey finally culminates in Mr Casey's damnation of the Church and in their radically different conclusions from what has been said:

- The bishops and priests of Ireland have spoken, said Dante, and they must be obeyed.
- Let them leave politics alone, said Mr Casey, or the people may leave their church alone. (33)

Mr Casey's point of view suggests that the priests' behaviour might cause people to deny the Church any influence on their lives in the long run. This

standpoint foreshadows Stephen's own position towards the end of the novel. During his early adolescence, Stephen experiences the enormous pressure issued by the Roman Catholic Church with regard to moral and social expectations signalled by a strict definition of mortal sins and eternal damnation. These demands, expressed in their absoluteness, cause Stephen to suffer immensely. He desperately tries to meet the standards set by the Roman Catholic Church and to fulfil the duties of a pious Catholic. When asked by the director of the college whether he has ever felt he had a vocation, Stephen briefly considers joining the order before he realises that he has to abandon this thought:

> His destiny was to be elusive of social and religious orders. The wisdom of the priest's appeal did not touch him to the quick. He was destined to learn his own wisdom apart from others or to learn the wisdom of others himself wandering among the snares of the world. (165)

Stephen ends up disillusioned with the traditional powers at work in his country, severely doubting the traditional Irish understanding of concepts such as *family*, *nation* or *religion*. These reservations are encapsulated in the passage where Stephen expresses his definite 'non serviam.' Discussing his ambitions in life with his friend Cranly, he firmly declares: "I will not serve that in which I no longer believe whether it call itself my home, my fatherland or my church" (251).

Similar to Stephen Dedalus, Joyce himself believed that an act of "self-reflection was required" and that a change in the mind-set of the Irish had to precede any political or cultural action (Bulson 33). Identifying and criticising the attitude of subservience and submissiveness as a key deficiency of the Irish in their struggle for political and cultural independence, Joyce dedicated much of his energy to portraying the city, the inhabitants' lifestyles and culture in order to draw attention to the emptiness of the above-mentioned concepts in his homeland. Consequently, Joyce focused on Dublin and the behaviour of its inhabitants to illustrate how deeply rooted the "cultural inferiority" was in "the Irishman's heritage" (Watson, *Irish Identity* 153). Furthermore, *Dubliners* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* indicate that those who encouraged the population to adhere to these ideals – namely the political and religious leaders – were primarily interested in preserving their own predominant and powerful position within Irish society. In order to illustrate how trapped and constrained by their own set of beliefs Joyce thought the Irish people really were, Joyce's texts allow the readers to familiarise themselves with the protagonists' thoughts and to become aware of their inner experiences, dreams and attitudes. In this context, Joyce wrote to Grant Richards, the eventual publisher of his short story collection, "I seriously believe that you

will retard the course of civilisation in Ireland by preventing the Irish people from having a good look at themselves in my nicely polished looking-glass" (as quoted by Ellmann 90). Joyce's *Dubliners* captures the paralysis in Dublin to trigger people's self-reflection: "My intention was to write a chapter of the moral history of my country and I chose Dublin for the scene because this city seemed to me the centre of paralysis" (as quoted by Ellmann 83). As a consequence, the plots of his short stories are not spectacular. *Dubliners* meticulously renders the characters' lives by inviting the reader to follow the characters as they walk through the city, to accompany the protagonists on bus or tram rides or to participate in their daily work and pub visits in order to expose the reader to the uneventful life of Dublin society at the time portrayed.

Wirth-Nesher has correctly noted that "[i]n Joyce's city most of the scenes take place in public spaces. Even if the characters are depicted at home, the central scene of the story will tend to be located in a public setting" (161). In her excellent chapter "Estranged Cities: Defamiliarizing Home," which examines how Dublin is used as a setting by James Joyce, Wirth-Nesher offers a careful interpretation of public and private space:

> The effect of the predominance of public space is an emphasis on the Dubliner as a man or woman lacking a personal environment, a person composed of public roles. Dominant by its absence is any depiction of 'home' in the conventional bourgeois sense of the term. The stories of childhood offer no scenes of the nuclear family, with aunts and uncles conspicuously substituting for parents. Every home that we see is cheerless, bereft of hearth, stifling or violent. The unmarried Dubliners, whether young or old, are not single by choice but by default or deficiency of character. [...] With little comfort at home and less at work [...]. (162)

In spite of being a European capital at the beginning of the twentieth century, Dublin is not presented as a true metropolis but rather as a provincial town. The city is populated with characters who often seem to know each other – if only through some common acquaintance of theirs. They frequently stop in the streets to chat with one another or they pass people whom they know. Provincialism, in Wirth-Nesher's opinion, therefore, becomes one of the more prominent features in defining the Irish capital:

> Joyce's Dublin is characterized not by plenitude but by paucity. Dublin's dwellers, as depicted in Joyce's fiction, are not outsiders by virtue of social class, race, immigration, tourism, or politics. They are outsiders by virtue of being Dubliners. [...][T]hey yearn for a metropolis despite their living in one. The stories are laced with the names of other cities – Paris, Berlin, London, Melbourne, Buenos Aires, Milan – inaccessible places for the Dubliners who find their own city all too accessible. (159)

Although most of the figures are well embedded in Dublin and although the public space is more a space of familiarity than of anonymity, the characters

appear to be discontent with the city's accessibility. In Joyce, the terms *accessibility* and *familiarity* are negatively connoted and come to represent – to use Joyce's own expression – "hemiplegia" in Dublin both with regard to space and relations (as quoted by Gilbert 55).

In fact, the theme of *paralysis* in *Dubliners* is experimented with in different contexts: the term is used to denote "the inability of physical movement, but it is also a spiritual, social, cultural, political and historical malaise" (Bulson 36). In the first short story of the collection, "The Sisters," the word 'paralysis,' mentioned in the first paragraph, labels the medical condition which the priest suffers from as a result of his three strokes. The main character, a young first-person narrator, is puzzled by the strange sound of the word and he admits: "It filled me with fear, and yet I longed to be nearer to it and to look upon its deadly work" (*Dubliners* 7). Remarkably, then, 'paralysis' in this short story basically denotes the priest's transitory state between life and death. In most of the later short stories in this collection, this metaphor of paralysis implying death is not spelt out explicitly but is implied by people being or feeling stuck in their hometown and their relationships.

Little Chandler in the short story "A Little Cloud" is a good example of a figure who feels imprisoned in his existence. The protagonist contemplates his own private and professional life, while he anticipates his old friend Gallaher's visit to Dublin, who "[e]ight years before he had seen [...] off at the North Wall" and who had meanwhile "become a brilliant figure on the London Press" (76). The prospect of meeting this well-respected man, whom he deeply admires, evokes a sudden feeling of pre-eminence in Chandler: "For the first time in his life he felt himself superior to the people he passed. For the first time his soul revolted against the dull inelegance of Capel Street. There was no doubt about it: if you wanted to succeed you had to go away. You could do nothing in Dublin" (79). This epiphany convinces him that to succeed in life, paralysed Dublin must be left behind.[27] Feeling restricted by the atmosphere of the Irish capital, he believes a true metropolis like London would offer him the opportunity to express himself as a writer: "He was not sure what idea he wished to express but the thought that a poetic moment had touched him took life within him like an infant hope" (79). When he finally meets up with his old friend, he is too impressed by Gallaher's knowledge of European capitals like

[27] According to Holman and Harmon in *A Handbook to Literature*, "*[e]piphany* was given currency as a critical term by James Joyce, who used it to designate an event in which the essential nature of something – a person, a situation, an object – was suddenly perceived. It is thus an intuitive grasp of reality achieved in a quick flash of recognition in which something, usually simple and commonplace, is seen in a new light, and as Joyce says, 'its soul, its whatness leaps to us from the vestment of its appearance'" ("Epiphany" 174).

Paris and London to recognise the negative undertone in his friend's utterances when describing life in the printing business in London:

> It pulls you down, he said, Press life. Always hurry and scurry, looking for copy and sometimes not finding it: and then, always to have something new in your stuff. Damn proofs and printers, I say, for a few days. I'm deuced glad, I can tell you, to get back to the old country. Does a fellow good, a bit of a holiday. I feel a ton better since I landed in dear dirty Dublin .... (81–82)

Later in the evening, while Little Chandler is minding his baby boy "[a] dull resentment against his own life awoke within him" (91). Reckoning that he – a husband and father – has missed the chance to escape from the monotony and constrictions of Dublin life, he regards himself as "a prisoner for life" (93). Losing control over his emotions, he shouts at his little son, whom he has rocked to and fro for a while to stop him from crying. The boy's startled screaming causes Chandler's wife to intervene, which only distances the young man further from his family. This scene finally intensifies the impression that neither his professional nor his private life in Dublin bears much potential for fulfilment.

In the short story "Eveline," the eponymous female protagonist is first encountered by the reader as she is brooding over a similar dilemma to Chandler's: she has been asked to follow her lover Frank to Buenos Aires and leave behind her dreary and depressing life in Dublin. In the first scene, the young woman is sitting "at the window watching the evening invade the avenue" (37). The window symbolises the threshold between her home and the outside world. A variation of this image is offered at a later stage of this text when Eveline is standing at the iron gates at the harbour which separate her old and all too familiar life from "her new home, in a distant unknown country" (38). Both images nicely illustrate her inner conflict: she is torn between the desire for fulfilment and her duties towards her family. Eveline has to opt for either home and the past or the unknown world and the future. If she chooses her home and the past, she will have to stay in the restricting Irish capital and play her role as a dutiful daughter by looking after her father and her younger siblings as she had promised before her mother passed away. Pursuing the option of freedom and a new life, however, will mean leaving Dublin, embarking on a ship with Frank and beginning a life of uncertainty. Pondering over this step, Eveline believes that this move would offer her the opportunity to escape domestic violence, home and "all its familiar objects which she had dusted once a week for so many years, wondering where on earth all the dust came from" (37–38). In the Hill household, dust has obviously come to hide the existing silence, the profound lack of communication and homeliness. Thus, leaving her home, Eveline would no longer have to wonder about "the

name of the priest whose yellowing photograph hung on the wall above the broken harmonium" (38). Instead, her marital status would change and she imagines that due to this "[p]eople would treat her with respect then" (38). However, the reader not only shares her fantasies in which she imagines what her future life with Frank will be like, but also her memories where she recalls the happiness of her childhood. Carefully balancing the pros and cons, she feels that "now that she was about to leave [her present life] she did not find it a wholly undesirable life" (39). Thinking about Frank, she consents: "First of all it had been an excitement for her to have a fellow and then she had begun to like him" (40). Later on, standing beside Frank at the barrier and clutching the railing at the harbour "[a]ll the seas of the world tumbled about her heart. He was drawing her into them: he would drown her" (42). Eveline's immobility is sharply contrasted by Frank rushing beyond the barrier and the *tempus fugit* element as the "boat blew a long mournful whistle into the mist" (42). Her state of paralysis even exceeds the ending of the short story: "He was shouted at to go on but still called to her. She set her white face to him, passive, like a helpless animal. Her eyes gave him no sign of love or farewell or recognition" (43). Portraying Eveline as "passive, like a helpless animal," the narrator once more hints at the far-reaching consequences hemiplegia has on Dublin's inhabitants (43). Standing entranced at the railings and deprived of any human will, Eveline is entirely trapped and can neither start a new life with Frank nor return to her old home.

Whereas Eveline's indecision adds to her unhappy situation, Irish society and the pressure that it puts on individuals is blamed in "The Dead." As in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, the annual dinner and dance at Kate, Julia and Mary Jane Morkan's around Christmas-time is yet another instance where a festive event is nearly ruined by guests whose views on politics and culture differ widely. Gabriel Conroy, Kate and Julia's nephew, represents the open-minded and modern Irishman. The tension between the traditionalists and the modern representatives is reinforced by Gabriel's argument with Miss Ivors, a passionate nationalist and firm believer in the Irish language and culture. Like Synge and Yeats, Miss Ivors orients herself by looking towards the west of Ireland and the Gaelic past rather than towards Europe. She even invites Gabriel to join herself and her friends on "an excursion to the Aran Isles" to spend the summer visiting his own country (215). Gabriel's evading answer, "[w]ell, we usually go to France or Belgium or perhaps Germany [...] partly to keep in touch with the languages and partly for a change," prompts her to make a condescending comment about his – supposed – lack of knowledge about Irish geography, the country's population and its culture (215). These accusations do not fail to have their desired effect. Provoked by her statements, Gabriel loses his countenance and exclaims: "O, to tell you the truth, [...], I'm

sick of my own country, sick of it" (216). When he explains to his wife what the row was all about, Gretta becomes quite enthusiastic about the prospect of going west:

> His wife clasped her hands excitedly and gave a little jump.
> – O, do go, Gabriel, she cried. I'd love to see Galway again.
> – You can go if you like, said Gabriel coldly. (218)

This exchange between the couple underlines what an outsider Gabriel, whose thoughts resemble those of Little Chandler and Stephen Dedalus, is at the dance. When asked to give a speech before dinner, he once more attempts to persuade the others of his own convictions: "A new generation is growing up in our midst, a generation actuated by new ideas and new principles. It is serious and enthusiastic for these new ideas and its enthusiasm, even when it is misdirected, is, I believe, in the main sincere" (232). Although Gabriel acknowledges the good old times in Ireland later in his speech, this attitude reveals much of James Joyce's own standpoint. Unlike Yeats, who had drawn his inspiration from ancient Irish legends and myths from the west of Ireland, Joyce's interest was much more urban and he did not share Yeats' belief that the country could be advanced by reviving its Gaelic heritage.

Instead of concentrating on Ireland's old myths and legends, Joyce cast his eye on ancient Greek civilisation in *Ulysses* by echoing the protagonist's wanderings described in Homer's *Odyssey*. Moreover, he extensively experimented with the possibilities which art offered to transcend hemiplegia. Watson rightly states that "[f]or Joyce, then, the sense of freedom and even liberation which both Yeats and Synge found in aspects of Irish life and culture was simply not available; such freedom had to be fought for and won by silence, exile and cunning, by a series of willed, even histrionic detachments" (*Irish Identity* 153). I would even argue that while Joyce criticised the Irish spirit and Dublin as its deadlock at the turn of the century in *Dubliners*, *Ulysses* presents a number of propositions indicating how the paralysis of the city could be overcome.

In this respect, *Dubliners* could be interpreted as depicting reality as perceived by Joyce, while moments referring to counter-concepts of this reality are exploited in *Ulysses*. By choosing 16 June 1904 as the setting for his universal novel, Gotzmann states, Joyce tried to capture the world in its entirety in order to grasp the normal course of life at the beginning of the twentieth century. In *Ulysses*, Dublin, now a place of modernity, a new metropolis, suddenly represents the world (22). To some extent then, there is a correlation between the minute geographical description of Ireland's capital and the literary creation of Dublin as a mental concept.

In fact, the term *omphalos*, navel, occurs four times in the novel, underlining what an essential and vital position Dublin – or specifically the Martello

Tower – could occupy in the world.[28] *Ulysses* thus transfers the site of the *omphalos* from Delphi, "the center of prophecy in ancient Greece" and at the same time the hub of the earth and the universe in the Greek world, to Dublin and the twentieth century, thereby stressing the potential of the Irish capital (Gifford and Seidman 17). As Buck Mulligan, Stephen Dedalus and Haines currently live at the Martello Tower, the place has indeed turned into their centre of the universe. When Stephen Dedalus leaves the tower in the morning together with Buck Mulligan and Haines to go down to the sea, he locks the door and puts "the huge key in his inner pocket" (*Ulysses* 15). This act can be interpreted as carrying some deeper relevance: by holding on to the key of the *omphalos*, for the time being, Stephen has access to, as well as control over, his current home and metaphorically speaking over the private and hidden centre of the modern world. However, when he mentions that he is leaving, Buck Mulligan asks Stephen to hand over the key to Haines and himself. Sulking privately, Stephen vows to himself: "I will not sleep here tonight" but he is well aware that having refused to pray at his mother's deathbed "[h]ome [i. e. to his parent's house] also I cannot go" (19). Stephen's use of the word "usurper" to refer to Buck Mulligan indicates that he dislikes his friend's powerful influence, Buck Mulligan's friendship with the Englishman Haines, and his dominant behaviour in general (19).

Passing the key on to Buck Mulligan and Haines means that, despite paying the rent for the Martello Tower, Stephen is, at a later stage, locked out from his temporary home. Forced to kill time, Stephen spends time with Bloom, who is likewise trying to postpone his return home. When Bloom, having invited Stephen to his home, finally arrives "[a]t the housesteps of the 4th of the equidifferent uneven numbers, number 7 Eccles street, he inserted his hand mechanically into the back pocket of his trousers to obtain his latchkey," only to find out that "[i]t was in the corresponding pocket of the trousers which he had worn on the day but one preceding" (546). Thus, "the keyless couple" contemplates on whether "[t]o enter or not to enter. To knock or not to knock" (546). In this scene, Bloom and Stephen are presented as barred from entering their homes as well as excluded from their own private realms. They wonder whether they should invade Molly's private space, and possibly her privacy, by entering, and if so, whether they should politely knock to prepare Molly for this intrusion into her private sphere. These questions in *Ulysses*, a novel which is characterised by revealing the hidden and private, present a remarkable

[28] The translation of *omphalos* was taken from Liddell and Scott's dictionary *A Greek-English Lexicon* ("Omphalos" 1229). The term is mentioned in Joyce's *Ulysses* on pages 7, 15, 32 and 329.

variation of Hamlet's dilemma "[t]o be or not to be, that is the question" (*Hamlet* 3. 1. 56). Loathing the powerlessness of the situation, Bloom finally decides to *re*gain his home using

> [a] stratagem. Resting his feet on the dwarf wall, he climbed over the area railings, compressed his hat on his head, grasped two points at the lower union of rails and stiles, lowered his body gradually by its length of five feet nine inches and a half to within two feet ten inches of the area pavement and allowed his body to move freely in space by separating himself from the railings and crouching in preparation for the impact of the fall. (*Ulysses* 546)

Climbing over the wall, Bloom and Stephen literally invade the space which Bloom has left to Molly and Hugh Boylan during the day. This indicates that, although Bloom lingered in the city for as long as possible, he is now willing to reclaim the private space of his home.

Early in the morning, when Buck Mulligan is shaving outside the Martello Tower talking to Stephen, he asks for a similarly active role in overcoming hemiplegia in Dublin. He declares that if Stephen and himself worked together, they could alter the current situation in Ireland and transform the island. In fact, the mirror which Buck Mulligan uses initially reminds Stephen of the Irish people's destiny: "It is a symbol of Irish art. The cracked lookingglass of a servant" (6). Taking up Stephen's metaphor, Buck Mulligan hints at his hidden expectations and dreams for the country suggesting that Ireland could become as cultured as Greece once was: "Cracked lookingglass of a servant! [...] God, Kinch [i.e. Stephen], if you and I could only work together we might do something for the island. *Hellenise* it" (6, my emphasis). The ancient Greek civilisation is taken as a model for Ireland at the turn of the century, thereby offering an alternative to the prevalent provincialism of Dublin as presented in *Dubliners* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. In connection with the repeated use of the term *omphalos*, this quote shows that Dublin is envisaged as the source of new antique grandeur.

As indicated above, Joyce's view with regard to reviving culture in Ireland differs greatly from the approaches chosen by Yeats and Synge. Nevertheless, what they all have in common is the value they ascribe to the power of art: for Joyce, "his hero is the Artist" (Watson, *Irish Identity* 151). Thus, Joyce claims that through creativity Dublin could take up a different position in the world and escape the present constrictions in his homeland. On a textual level, Joyce tried to implement this belief by starting to experiment. Exploring with genres, styles and narrative devices, he attempted to invent new forms of expression in order to abandon the constraints that made him feel powerless in political and social matters. The most noticeable technique which Joyce adopted and developed to meet his own needs is his frequent use of stream of

consciousness or interior monologue. In *A Handbook to Literature*, Holman and Harmon define the term *interior monologue* as

> [o]ne of the techniques for presenting the stream of consciousness of a character. Recording the internal, emotional experience of the character it reaches downward to the nonverbalized level where images must be used to represent sensations or emotions. It assumes the unrestricted and uncensored portrayal of the totality of interior experience. It gives, therefore, the appearance of being illogical and associational. (249)

The direct interior monologue as used in *Ulysses* is a technique "in which the author seems not to exist and the interior self of the character is given directly, as though the reader were overhearing an articulation of the stream of thought and feeling flowing through the character's mind […]" (249). The personal experiences, feelings and thoughts of the three main protagonists in Joyce's text considerably shape the atmosphere of the novel. By following the actions of Leopold Bloom and Stephen Dedalus as they move through the urban space and by familiarising the reader with their – as well as Molly Bloom's – most intimate thoughts, the loss of coherence and security experienced in Modernism is partly compensated for. According to Erzgräber,

> 'everyday life' of Leopold Bloom, Molly Bloom and Stephen Dedalus is made up by their manifold associations and reflections which are evoked by what they are experiencing at the moment; 'everyday life,' moreover, consists of the sum of all the spiritual, philosophical, theological and social traditions which define life in Dublin at the beginning of the twentieth century. Finally, 'everyday life' is the sum of all the outer factual and the inner psychic and intellectual factors which can shape human life. (97, my translation)[29]

In order to make the characters' inner life as well as their epiphanies available to the reader, both *Ulysses* and *Dubliners* are characterised by internalisation and a strong concentration on privateness; the reader thus has access to the characters' most personal reflections and feelings. In Molly Bloom's interior monologue, the reader is turned into a confidant, with whom she shares her most secret thoughts. Burgess explains that interior monologue as a

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[29] Original: Zum "Alltag" gehören bei Leopold Bloom, Molly Bloom und Stephen Dedalus die vielfältigen Assoziationen und Reflexionen, die durch ihr momentanes Erlebnis geweckt werden; "Alltag" ist darüber hinaus auch die Summe aller geistigen, philosophischen, theologischen und sozialen Traditionen, die das Leben in Dublin zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts bestimmen. "Alltag" ist schliesslich die Summe aller äusseren faktischen und aller inneren psychischen und intellektuellen Faktoren, die menschliches Leben beeinflussen können. (97)

> device had been used before – by Dickens, Samuel Butler, even Jane Austen – but never on the scale or to the limits employed by Joyce. After all, he lived in the psychoanalytic era, though he considered he had nothing to learn from either Freud or Jung. (*Joysprick* 48)

Molly reveals her most intimate thoughts and sexual fantasies to the reader, and thereby compensates for the lack of confidentiality that is missing among the characters in the text. Regardless of the fact that the characters have a vivid inner life, silence and miscommunication govern their interactions. Both Bloom and Molly are partly aware of their partner's infidelity. Molly has observed Bloom scribbling a message to Martha Clifford and Bloom immediately grasps the situation when Molly hides Hugh Boylan's letter, which he hands her, under her pillow. However, instead of voicing their worries or insecurities, they remain silent: on the plot level, secrecy and concealment rule the scene. Contrary to Beckett's and Friel's characters, as will be shown, Joyce's protagonists do not even attempt to establish common ground to increase familiarity and intimacy amongst each other. Bloom and Molly's relationship is rather defined by a certain hollowness. Jung concluded that in Molly's chapter

> the suffocating emptiness becomes so unbearably tense that it reaches the bursting point. This utterly hopeless emptiness is the dominant note of the whole book. It not only begins and ends in nothingness, it consists of nothing but nothingness. (9–10)

Fischer indicates that in the two interior monologues in *Ulysses* in the Proteus and Penelope chapters intimacy is self-directed: sender and receiver of the message "are one and the same person," there is no mediation whatsoever (241). Referring to Joos' linguistic study of different degrees of formality, Fischer further concludes that the interior monologue "is an extreme variety of intimate style, or even the most intimate style possible" (242). This intimate style of Molly is linguistically achieved by the frequent use of colloquialism and incomplete syntactic structures as well as a lack of punctuation. Hence, intimacy in *Ulysses* is only transmitted on a narratological level, where it is witnessed by the reader, who in the end knows more about the characters than they know about each other. Neverthess, although

> Molly's main concern is her personal and private life, she provides not only a glimpse into her inner self, as is generally acknowledged, but also – as the wife of Leopold Bloom – she provides a vital post of observation of him. […] Molly's monologue literally begins and ends with Bloom […]. (Sandulescu 114)

Molly Bloom's interior monologue illustrates Habermas' and Lehnert's argument, as outlined in the chapter on the theoretical approaches when

defining the public and the private, that, as a result of cultural and historical transformations of the public sphere, nothing after Freud is left which cannot be expressed and shared with the reader.[30] As indicated, Lehnert further claims that due to the language developed by psychoanalysis around 1900, a degree of intimacy could be expressed for which there had been no words before. Nevertheless, intimacy in this context showed a strong tendency to be reduced to sexuality (13). The language of psychoanalysis, however, quite generally provided characters with the vocabulary needed to verbalise their own feelings, experiences, memories and senses – in short, their most intimate perception of the world. In a world bereft of meaning, Lehnert identifies people's immense longing for deeper significance in their lives (82). Comparing their personal views with a given public truth, the language of psychoanalysis enabled people to formulate their own, entirely personal, counter-realities. Furthermore, it allowed them to establish their own variation of certain myths. This linguistic power to rewrite and personalise myths goes hand in hand with the speaker's creation of identity and the attempt to regain a sense of autochthony. However,

> […] memory is misleading. It constantly transforms that which has been – and yet, precisely in this change can the actual, psychological truth be found according to Freud: not the seemingly objective events are of importance, but that which the subjective memorising makes of it: it produces truth. This makes memory work potentially endless, but always leads towards the present in that its aim is the present ego. Besides, memory is always a private entity which can only be *compared* to myth; a last attempt to establish a new rootedness in the history of mankind in a completely secularised world that is totally obsessed with the present. This rootedness is one of the main reasons for the overwhelming success of psychoanalysis in the western hemisphere […]. (84, my translation, original emphasis)[31]

Although it is paradoxical to publish privateness and illusionary to share intimacy with others without losing the personal and unique element in the process, this is what Joyce ultimately strives for in *Ulysses*. Intimacy is

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30 Habermas' and Lehnert's interpretation of the impact which Freud's use of language had on the transformation of the private and the public realm is found in Chapter II (p. 17–20).

31 Original: […] die Erinnerung ist trügerisch. Sie verändert ständig das, was war – aber genau in dieser Veränderung, so Freud, liegt die eigentliche, die psychologische Wahrheit: Nicht die vermeintlich objektiven Ereignisse sind von Belang, sondern das, was die subjektive Erinnerungsarbeit daraus macht: Sie schafft Wahrheit. Die Arbeit des Erinnerns wird somit potentiell endlos, aber sie führt immer zur Gegenwart, denn ihr Ziel ist das jetzige Ich. Und die Erinnerung ist immer eine private, die nur mit dem Mythos *verglichen* wird: letzter Versuch, sich in der endgültig säkularisierten und gegenwartsversessenen Welt eine neue Verwurzelung in der Menschheitsgeschichte zu schaffen. Diese Verwurzelung gehört zu den wesentlichen Gründen für den überwältigenden Erfolg der Psychoanalyse in der westlichen Welt […]. (84, original emphasis)

undermined in any book or play where it is articulated publicly, but – although Joyce denounced Freud's influence on his works – psychoanalysis and the language of Freud appear to have unconsciously provided a subtext for the works of Joyce, who transformed the private and the secret realm into a cult.

In conclusion, I want to suggest that Joyce chose Dublin as the setting for his texts to draw attention to the many constraints he perceived in the Irish capital at the turn of the century. Trapped by these conditions, Joyce's characters suffer from the prevailing atmosphere of dullness and lapse into a state of paralysis. Moreover, they exhibit a profound lack of intimacy amongst each other. However, Joyce's extensive use of interior monologue – or in other words, the characters' revelation or publication of their private and most intimate thoughts – enables the reader to witness the characters' vivid inner life. On a narratological level, Joyce's strong emphasis on the characters' most intimate side of their personality tears down traditional boundaries established between public and private realms. This structural device offers Joyce the opportunity to present an entirely different, yet much more intimate, notion of true Irishness.

Contrary to the setting Joyce opted for, Samuel Beckett's plays *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame* are "set in a vaguely European context which is not Ireland and not any other recognizable place. Against the tradition in Irish drama of quite specific local references, Beckett's drama is distinctly vague in regard to scene and setting" (Harrington 172). As will be outlined in this reading, Beckett's protagonists are no longer securely rooted in the homes of a distinct (Irish) village, and the choice of his desolate settings symbolises the void into which characters are thrown from an existentialist point of view.

In *Waiting for Godot*, Vladimir and Estragon live as two tramps on an unidentifiable road in the middle of nowhere. Albeit the difference in setting, Kiberd argues that Beckett's choice of two tramps as protagonists for this play indicates his indebtedness to Irish literary traditions:

> The image of the migrant, tramp or traveller is taken up from Gaelic tradition not just because displacement is a condition of the modern intellectual but more especially because such a figure is adaptive. Of such characters one might say what Salman Rushdie observes of postcolonial exiles in *Imaginary Homelands*: 'they are people who root themselves in ideas rather than in places, in memories as much as in material things; people who have been obliged to define themselves because they are so defined by others – by their otherness; people in whose deepest selves strange fusions occur, unprecedented unions between what they are and where they find themselves.' The migrant is not simply transformed into a hybrid by travels; she or he creates a wholly new art by virtue of multiple locations. ("Literature and Politics" 29)

Completely uprooted, dispossessed and "bored to death," Vladimir and Estragon spend their time waiting for Godot, "a kind of acquaintance" of

theirs (*Waiting for Godot* 81 and 23). Sadly, they have a rather faint notion of this figure and Estragon admits that "[p]ersonally I wouldn't even know him if I saw him" (23). Not surprisingly, he keeps forgetting exactly what they are waiting for and is left with no purpose in life. Vladimir, on the other hand, clings to the only piece of certainty and meaning which he believes their waiting is supposed to offer in this desolate situation:

> What are we doing here, *that* is the question. And we are blessed in this, that we happen to know the answer. Yes, in this immense confusion one thing alone is clear. We are waiting for Godot to come – [...]. Or for night to fall. (*Pause)* We have kept our appointment, and that's an end to that. We are not saints, but we have kept our appointment. How many people can boast as much? (80, original emphasis)

Even Vladimir's self-assurance slowly vanishes in the course of his own statement. In the end, he claims that their feat is rooted in not having abandoned their moral standards and position in this uncertainty.

The setting chosen in *Endgame* is even bleaker: enclosed in a room with two windows, the curtains of which are drawn to increase the prevailing atmosphere of claustrophobia, the characters feel they are the only people alive, the only ones who were spared from death (15 and 32). Complaining that "[t]he whole place [i. e. the space they inhabit] stinks of corpses" (33), Hamm condemns the universe and makes a clear statement about his attitude towards life on earth suggesting that "[b]eyond is the ... other hell" (23). Referring to what he experiences as a post-apocalyptic existence, Hamm assumes that "[n]ature has forgotten us. [...] But we breathe, we change! We lose our hair, our teeth! Our bloom! Our ideals! [...] No one that ever lived ever thought so crooked as we" (16). Wondering "[w]hat's happening" or "taking its course," Hamm and Clov are faced with "the same questions, the same answers" throughout their lives (26 and 13). However, Hamm, in contrast to Clov, is fond of the old questions. They offer some order and a kind of consistency and continuity in a world defined by "existential homelessness" (Coetzee 20). In fact, these same old questions that reappear in Beckett's plays are not the only means used by the characters trying to pass time and to ease their agony and homelessness. Indeed, repetition appears not only on a verbal but also on a structural level, which provides them with some kind of order to hold on to:

> Instead of following the tradition which demands that a play have an exposition, a climax and a dénouement, Beckett's plays have a cyclical structure which might indeed be better described as a diminishing spiral. [...] In this spiral descending towards a final closure that can never be found in the Beckettian universe, the characters take refuge in repetition, repeating their own actions and words and often those of others – in order to pass the time. (Worton 69)

In the long run, however, none of the repetitive actions or words nor the rituals they indulge in reduces their burden. Hamm outlines Clov's miserable and lonely future when he announces that

> [o]ne day you'll be blind, like me. You'll be sitting there, a speck in the void, in the dark, for ever, like me. […] Infinite emptiness will be all around you, all the resurrected dead of all the ages wouldn't fill it, and there you'll be like a little bit of grit in the middle of the steppe. (*Endgame* 28–29)

Therefore, living "in the midst of nothingness," in this void, Beckett's characters in *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame* inhabit a world of uncertainties and "abyssal depths" (*Waiting for Godot* 81 and 80).

In some respect, their world resembles that of Stephen Dedalus in Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* after he pronounces the three concepts *home*, *fatherland*, and *church* dead and refuses to serve that in which he has ceased to believe (251). However, Stephen deliberately chooses to abolish these traditional ideals of place, nationhood and religion in his life, all of which have provided people with a sense of belonging for centuries. In his eyes, these terms have become empty signifiers that are no longer worth fighting for and they fail to meet his expectations. With regard to his future, Stephen claims: "I will try to express myself in some mode of life or art as freely as I can and as wholly as I can, using for my defence the only arms I allow myself to use – silence, exile, and cunning" (251). Although his newly established world lacks the definite framework offered by the former reference points, the quote underlines that Stephen is still in full control of his life and actions. Hence, he does not suffer from the change of paradigm. His creativity fills the void. By contrast, Beckett's characters are in a rather different situation. Although the elements of silence, exile, and cunning are also present in Beckett's oeuvre, these terms have entirely different connotations. In the Beckettian world, none of Stephen's control and composure is conveyed. In fact, his protagonists feel exposed to this void that is representative of their world. They are in a continual struggle to gain some kind of understanding of their existence. Thus, "the Beckettian universe [is] governed by rules that [are], at bottom, philosophical" (Pattie 105). Nonetheless, the characters' efforts are – naturally – in vain; as a result, they feel more and more powerless and exiled in a world without apparent meaning. The numerous instances when they lapse into silence in the midst of their conversation come to symbolise the lack of meaning and coherence which they experience and suffer from being thrown into this void:

> The "oddities" of Beckettian characters always also portray the particular embodiment of universal issues. The issues are usually splitting, fragmentation, isolation,

> nothingness, and death, presented in a fashion that appals, while, at the same time, posing the question of how moments of laughter, liveliness, love, grace, and consolation occur. (Smith xv-xvi)

Despite the fact that Beckett's scenes contain comic aspects, the characters behave as if their experience of life were characterised by a constant staring into a baseless abyss which results in their increasing insecurity and a deeply felt sense of unease. Their physical handicaps – the disabilities range from characters being blind, lame and deaf to those who have lost their legs – serve as metonymies for the immense psychological suffering the characters are undergoing as a result of their powerlessness. "[H]uman loneliness, physical disintegration, mental alienation, intellectual fiasco, creative failure, and above all the unavoidable dualism of mind and body, reality and fiction" have indeed been identified as some of the most prominent aspects in Beckett's plays (Federman as quoted by Pattie 121).

If analysed from a philosophical point of view, Beckett's characters experience their *Dasein*, their Being-in-the-world, – to express it in Heidegger's terminology – in a much more passive manner than Stephen Dedalus. Having been thrown into a world from which order, "traditional coherence and meaning" – and thus certainty – have been withdrawn, Beckett's characters struggle to cope in an absurd world of "doubt and unknowingness" (Graver 24 and 22). The absurdity of life, as addressed from an existentialist standpoint in Beckett's plays, is, according to Cooper, based on

> the assumption that it is no longer possible to believe that there is some transcendent justification or underlying ground for our existence. If God is dead, then we find ourselves 'abandoned', 'forlorn', 'thrown' into a world, with no pregiven direction or legitimation. Though we seek some overarching meaning and purpose for our lives, we have to face the fact that there is no 'proper function of humans' or 'plan in God's mind' that tells us the right way to be human. (494)[32]

The loss of basic truths and preconceptions about human existence and nature is, according to existentialist philosophers, closely related to feelings of anxiety, anguish or dread. In his "Postscript to 'What is Metaphysics?'" (1943), Heidegger examines the relation between anxiety, the 'nothing' and the uncanny. He identifies the 'nothing' as "the horror of the abyss," which metaphysical studies are quintessentially concerned with ("Postscript" 233). Oppenheim further argues that

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[32] The various philosophical influences on Samuel Beckett's work have been examined in great detail by Richard Lane in his book *Beckett and Philosophy*. For my own reading of Samuel Beckett's plays, I will embed his choice of setting and atmosphere in the philosophical studies of Martin Heidegger, Søren Kierkegaard and Jean-Paul Sartre.

> [i]n *Being and Time* the uncanny is located in the facticity of Dasein's encounter with the 'nothing' of the world. '[A]nxiety,' writes Heidegger, 'brings [Dasein] back from its absorption in the 'world'' and, as '[e]veryday familiarity collapses' and Dasein is individualized, it enters 'the existential 'mode' of the *not-at-home*.' Similarly, in his 1919 paper on the subject Freud focuses on the horrifying quality of that which is unhomelike or unhomely, on the 'un' of the *unheimlich* that serves not to oppose it to the *heimlich*, but to reveal its origin within it: '[T]he 'uncanny' is that class of the terrifying which leads back to something long known to us, once very familiar. In a word, then, the uncanny originates in an emergence of the negated or repressed. (128)

Although Vladimir and Estragon in *Waiting for Godot* do not change their position in the course of the play and Hamm in *Endgame* repeatedly demands to be positioned right in the centre of the stage, Beckett's characters experience their environment as unhomely and uncanny. In his book *Being and Nothingness* (1943), Sartre suggests that "it is in anguish that man gets the consciousness of his freedom, or if you prefer, anguish is the mode of being of freedom as consciousness of being; it is in anguish that freedom is, in its being, in question for itself" (65). Hence, freedom is by no means idealised by Sartre. In his lecture on "Existentialism," he claims that "existence precedes essence" (345). In other words, "*human freedom operates against a background of facticity and situation*," whereby "*facticity is all the facts about myself which cannot be changed*," be it one's "*age*, *sex*, *class of origin*, *race and so on*" (Howells 474, original emphasis). Freedom, on the other hand, is defined as the options or free choices the individual is presented "*within a given set of circumstances*, *after a particular past*, *and against the expectations*" of both oneself and others (474, original emphasis). Beckett's characters are thus examples of characters who – as Sartre suggested – are disgusted when they realise that they live in a world without apparent purpose, are condemned to freedom, and are asked to compose their own meaning in life and to make their own decisions. Incapable of understanding their existence, let alone starting to grasp their essence, Beckett's characters feel deeply alienated and lonely, their *Dasein* consists of mere suffering. In fact, Estragon summarises their private truth claiming that "[n]othing happens, nobody comes, nobody goes, it's awful!" (*Waiting for Godot* 41) Vladimir and Estragon repeatedly consider committing suicide as a result of their not-at-homeness in their *Dasein*. This perception of existence can be described in greater detail by examining Kierkegaard's outlook on the world. The philosopher suggested that human beings are not willing to accept existence as a mere fact, but keep trying to find an explanation and acceptable purpose for their existence. In *Either/Or* (1843), he distinguishes between two different phases of existence, namely the aesthetic and the ethic, both of which are finally superseded by a phase which he referred to as the religious mode. In her study of Kierkegaard's work, Pieper argues that

> [t]he aesthetic characters whom Kierkegaard has appear on stage may well find satisfaction in pleasure, and yet they are invariably unhappy as they understand that by means of the aesthetic they cannot attain this general feeling which they more or less consciously anticipated in their concept of a good life. The notes of poet A are most revealing in this respect [...]. One only has to list the characteristic traits provided in the description of his own self to visualise the wretchedness of the aesthetic existence: boredom, melancholy, gloom, suffering from the world and from one's own existence, meaninglessness in general, weariness of one's life, immobility, uneasiness, sadness, fears, a lack of joy, disillusionment, loneliness. (63, my translation)[33]

Kierkegaard was convinced that in order to control one's anxiety, the human being had to believe in God and accept the absurd notion of faith (MacIntyre 64). Although Beckett's characters share the characteristics used to describe the wretchedness of Kierkegaard's figures, they lack this profound belief in God. The existence of a transcendental figure in Beckett is not categorically denied, but certainly called into question. Vladimir and Estragon's suffering is symptomatic of Beckett's protagonists. Estragon is particularly doubtful and uncertain whether Godot, the (transcendental?) figure they long for, will ever arrive, and he presumes at times that Godot has either forgotten them or might not really exist. Worton claims that regardless of the fact that both in Act One and Two they are told that Godot will arrive on the following day, his absence further intensifies their misery:

> Much has been written about who or what Godot is. My own view [i.e. Worton's view] is that he is simultaneously whatever we think he is and not what we think he is: he is an *absence*, who can be interpreted at moments as God, death, the lord of the manor, a benefactor, even Pozzo, but Godot has a *function* rather than a *meaning*. He stands for what keeps us chained to and in existence, he is the unknowable that represents hope in an age when there is no hope, he is whatever fiction we want him to be – as long as he justifies our life-as-waiting. [...][S]o that audiences would [...] think about how all existence is a waiting. (70–71, original emphasis)

When the behaviour and state of mind of Beckett's characters is compared to the characteristics of Kierkegaard's aesthetic figures, as described above, Beckett's universe must be described as being overcrowded with such melancholic, depressed and disillusioned representatives. According to Ken-

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[33] Original: Die äesthetischen Figuren, die Kierkegaard aufmarschieren lässt, finden zwar im Genuss eine Befriedigung, aber dennoch sind sie allesamt unglücklich, weil sie begreifen, dass es ihnen mittels des Ästhetischen nicht gelingt, jenen Gesamtsinn zu verwirklichen, den sie in ihrer Vorstellung von einem guten Leben mehr oder weniger bewusst antizipiert haben. Am aufschlussreichsten sind diesbezüglich die Aufzeichnungen des Dichters A [...]. Man braucht nur die in seiner Selbstdarstellung auftauchenden Charakteristika aufzulisten, um sich ein Bild von der Trostlosigkeit des ästhetischen Daseins zu machen: Langeweile, Trübsinn, Schwermut, Leiden an der Welt und an sich selbst, Sinnlosigkeit in allem, Lebensüberdruss, Immobilität, Beklommenheit, Traurigkeit, Ängste, Freudlosigkeit, Illusionslosigkeit, Einsamkeit. (63)

neth and Alice Hamilton, "the misery of the human condition is not only the most obvious theme in Beckett, but also the best clue to interpreting his works" (as quoted by Pattie 148). They further explain that

> Beckett's works ask us to see the outlines of a universe beyond redemption; of a human condition bedevilled by suffering and even more bedevilled by the illusion of hope; of man's destiny to endure the meaningless activity within a purgatory allowing him no rest. Perhaps, infinitely slowly, the whole process in which man is trapped is grinding to a halt. Perhaps it will reach a final state of darkness and silence when the last word shall cease. Perhaps the prospect of an end is not merely a tantalising illusion built into the process, tempting man to torment himself still further. It really makes no difference, for it is present endurance that counts, not multiplying theories about this or that. The imagination can conceive as many worlds as it wishes – world without end. But, for Beckett, the believer's affirmation, 'World without end, Amen!' [sic] is the ultimate terror and the final surrender. (as quoted by Pattie 148)

The loss of the traditionally given metaphysical dimension in life is thus not easily overcome in Beckett's plays. The protagonists' distress and woe due to their actual *Dasein* causes them to question the contingency and validity of their existence. Vladimir, at one stage, suggests that the key function of every single proceeding in Estragon and his life lies in preventing their "reason from foundering" (*Waiting for Godot* 80). Hamm offers further insight into his perception of human existence in one of his soliloquies in *Endgame*: "Moment upon moment, pattering down, like the millet grains of … [*he hesitates*] … that old Greek, and all life long you wait for that to mount up to a life" (45). In other words, the fundamental aim of Beckett's characters is to grasp coherence in these single moments they experience in order to form a whole and to detect some meaning in life:

CLOV. Why this farce, day after day?
HAMM. Routine. One never knows. [*Pause.*] Last night I saw inside my breast. There was a big sore.
CLOV. Pah! You saw your heart.
HAMM. No, it was living. [*Pause. Anguished.*] Clov!
CLOV. Yes.
HAMM. What's happening?
CLOV. Something is taking its course.
[…]
HAMM. We're not beginning to … to … mean something?
CLOV. Mean something! You and I, mean something! [*Brief laugh.*] Ah that's a good one!
HAMM. I wonder. [*Pause.*] Imagine if a rational being came back to earth, wouldn't he be liable to get ideas into his head if he observed us long enough. [*Voice of rational being.*] Ah, good, now I see what it is, yes, now I understand what they're at! [*Clov starts, drops the telescope and begins to*

> *scratch his belly with both hands. Normal voice*.] And without going so far as that, we ourselves … [*with emotion*] … we ourselves … at certain moments … [*Vehemently.*] To think perhaps it won't all have been for nothing! (26–27)

This scene illustrates how Beckett's characters oscillate between experiencing their lives as utterly meaningless and at the same time hoping that there is some purpose in life – a point these characters simply fail to grasp. Hamm thus indicates how he longs for his pains to be significant despite the restricted nature of human beings and hopes that their lives, which in their case are equivalent to suffering, are not pointless. He yearns for a creature more rational than them who would be able to detect a certain pattern or order in this universe if he searched and observed their behaviour and condition long enough. However, recognising that the old order and concepts of *existence*, *meaning*, *religion* have been lost for good, they fail to establish the new order they deeply long for. In a world where meaning is concealed, the characters also fail to establish stable and sustainable relations amongst one another distrusting their own feelings or claiming not to have any at all. In a brief exchange between father and son, Nagg's revelation of his attitude towards Hamm is one of the most frigid and brutal passages in literature:

> HAMM. Scoundrel! Why did you engender me?
> NAGG. I didn't know.
> HAMM. What? What didn't you know?
> NAGG. That it'd be you. (35)

In Beckett, even blood relationships are said to be meaningless. There is no bonding amongst characters, but at the same time an amazingly harsh and direct way of communicating this fact. Thus, however suspicious the protagonists are of relationships, they are well aware of how horrifying existence would be without the company of the other:

> HAMM. Why do you stay with me?
> CLOV. Why do you keep me?
> HAMM. There's no one else.
> CLOV. There's nowhere else.
> [*Pause.*]
> HAMM. You're leaving me all the same.
> CLOV. I'm trying.
> HAMM. You don't love me.
> CLOV. No.
> HAMM. You loved me once.
> CLOV. Once! (14)

Hamm and Clov's sense of belonging is based on space and relations; regardless of the fact that they are not at home in the space they inhabit and that they do not trust their friendship, their need to hold on to some familiar place and companion is still revealed in this scene. According to Kim, "[t]o these characters, to be the absolute person in the other's life is connected with the confirmation of the meaning of existence" (55–56). In their companionship, these characters who are constantly searching for some kind of consistency in their lives seek to overcome the isolation of the *self*. Thus, their attempt to become indispensable or be the other character's only hope is one strategy used to undermine uncertainty and to hold on to some kind of security (*Endgame* 38 and 39). The lack of certainty further stems from their loss of language and, along with it, their loss of history and the past. When Clov admits to have loved Hamm "[o]nce!" his enforced exclamation serves as an example to illustrate that their language as well as their experiences and feelings are no longer valid or even available to them (14). Words such as "once" or "yesterday" have likewise become empty signifiers in their universe. Asked by Hamm to define the meaning of "yesterday," Clov replies "[t]hat means that bloody awful day, long ago, before this bloody awful day. I use the words you taught me. If they don't mean anything any more, teach me others. Or let me be silent" (32). Their language deficiency, therefore, mirrors their entire *Dasein*: the old meaning has been lost and they are waiting for it to be replaced, to be given new words to describe their existence, in the present or future:

> *Godot* is grounded in the promise of an arrival that never occurs, *Endgame* is the promise of a departure that never happens. This would seem to imply that the characters look forward to the future, yet if there is no past, there can be neither present nor future. So in order to be able to project onto an unlocatable – and perhaps non-existent – future, the characters need to *invent* a past for themselves. And this they do by inventing stories. (Worton 73, original emphasis)

In *Waiting for Godot*, Beckett indeed suggests that inventing stories or articulating one's personal experiences is a fundamental need of human beings. In order to escape the nothingness and the sense of loneliness as well as to evade the feeling of despair and utter devastation, the characters must converse even if they – at different stages – preferred not to:

> ESTRAGON. Let's stop talking for a minute, do you mind?
> VLADIMIR. (*feebly.*) All right. (*Estragon sits down on the mound. Vladimir paces agitatedly to and fro, halting from time to time to gaze into distance off. Estragon falls asleep. Vladimir halts before Estragon.*) Gogo!… Gogo! … GOGO!
> *Estragon wakes with a start.*

ESTRAGON. (*restored to the horror of his situation.*) I was asleep! (*Despairingly.*) Will you never let me sleep?
VLADIMIR. I felt lonely.
ESTRAGON. I had a dream.
VLADIMIR. Don't tell me!
ESTRAGON. I dreamt that –
VLADIMIR. DON'T TELL ME!
ESTRAGON. (*gesture towards the universe*). This one is enough for you? (*Silence.*) It's not nice of you, Didi. Who am I to tell my private nightmares to if I can't tell them to you?
VLADIMIR. Let them remain private. You know I can't bear that. (15–16)

The dialogues between Estragon and Vladimir are repetitive. Time and again, they expound the same topics, trying to come to terms with reality and their situation. The process of 'self-narrativisation' is shown to be existential. Moreover, it appears to have some healing function or power for the speaker. On a bigger scale, I would argue that this aspect of catharsis, the sharing of one's "private nightmares," is *the* crucial momentum in postcolonial Anglo-Irish literature. In an Irish context, Beckett's sentence spells out the collective nightmare the Irish have undergone: for centuries they have been misunderstood or misrepresented, and as they did not have power to control public opinion, they feel they have been wronged. Without the ability to possess land, it was difficult to survive. Large parts of the population were constantly on the verge of emigrating and losing touch with home. Estragon suggests that the sharing of their disastrous past might have a soothing effect on him, for neither their past nor their cultural background can die out as long as they continue verbalising it. Similarly, in keeping Gaelic mythologies and customs alive, the Irish have found a substitute for land and security. Storytelling has developed into a means of distinguishing themselves from the English and might well be regarded as an identity-forming or -supporting process. Furthermore, the need to voice their own experiences and to tell stories can be found in the tendency of Beckett's characters to lapse into long soliloquies in which they try to come to terms with their past, their crooked reality and their existence.[34] In

[34] The flux of language, lack of coherence and the loss of definite syntactic structures in Hamm's soliloquies and Lucky's tirades resemble a number of characteristics found in James Joyce's interior monologues. Similarly as in James Joyce's texts, in these long soliloquies Beckett's characters express their own thoughts in a seemingly unstructured, floating manner. In *Endgame*, Hamm attempts to postpone the ending of his story. At the same time he admits that "I'll soon have finished with this story. [*Pause.*] Unless I bring in other characters. [*Pause.*] But where would I find them? [*Pause.*] Where would I look for them? [*Pause. He whistles. Enter Clov.*] Let us pray to God" (37). Desperately aware that the ending of his story can no longer be postponed or delayed by means of imagination, he withdraws to ritualistic behaviour to preserve the soothing effect created by his storytelling.

spite of the speaker's need for disclosure, however, Vladimir strictly refuses to listen to Estragon's nightmares. He points out how agonising Estragon's laments are for him. Thus, he begs Estragon to "[l]et them remain private" (16). I would argue that, both physically and psychologically, he cannot endure listening to these narratives; for Beckett's characters, existence is painful and traumatising even if they do not indulge in their private nightmares or their (sub)consciousness.

However, it is not only nightmares that Beckett's characters struggle with: memories are equally problematic. Asked whether he can recall a single "instant of happiness" in his life, Clov – devoid of (positive) past memories – encapsulates the entirety of his feelings and perceptions of the world by replying "[n]ot to my knowledge" (*Endgame* 42). In other words, Clov – in contrast to Brian Friel's characters as I will show at a later stage – does not even remember a single moment in which he felt content and happy.[35] As far as he is concerned, his entire past is a heap of unhappy memories.

Hamm's parents, Nell and Nagg, on the other hand, both recall the story of the tailor on Lake Como. As Nell announces that she will leave Nagg, he tries to evoke their common memory of this instance as well as the feelings connected to the past event. Tragically, however, the characters' two narratives, due to their different points of view, completely fail to match. They cannot recreate their shared experience. I fully agree with Gatewood's interpretation of this scene when she observes that

> Nagg and Nell manage to evoke a shared memory, but the circumstances of each one's version of the memory differs [sic]: Nell remembers the depth and color of the water and her emotional state of happiness; Nagg remembers their boat capsizing resulting from Nell's excitement following his "tailor story," which he retells in the play. This instance demonstrates that memory attempts to evoke a past real scenario, and narrative attempts to establish the credibility of that scenario; but their differing accounts of the past undercut one another, thereby subverting the event's causality and coherence and distancing Nagg and Nell from a concrete past as well as from one another [...]. Nagg and Nell in *Endgame* attempt to evoke a shared past in order to unify their current, and separate, confinement. But their evocation of the past through memory serves an opposite end: rather than unite, the remembrance emphasizes the individuality of memory, revealing that it is always personal and never shared. (56–57)

As the couple do not succeed in building a bridge between their memories, Nell's recollection of the water, "you could see down to the bottom. So white. So clean. [...] Desert!," also marks her final words – she dies having tried to share her memory in vain (*Endgame* 22). This whole scene illustrates how utterly incapable Beckett's characters are of accepting the rules of modern

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35 Memories in Friel's writing will be discussed in Chapter IV (p. 219–225).

times in general and coping with difference. Heidegger suggests that *Dasein*, as Being-there, must have a place. Being-in-the-world is the basic state or fundamental existential constitution of *Dasein*. In Beckett, this sense of being-at-home in one's environment is perceived as not graspable, often even missing. In Beckett's universe, homelessness is comparable to a state Heidegger refers to as "coming to be the destiny of the world" ("Letter on 'Humanism'" 258). Beckett's characters indeed suffer from a type of "[h]omelessness in which not only human beings but the essence of the human being stumbles aimlessly about" and where one might say "[h]omelessness so understood consists in the abandonment of beings by being. Homelessness is the symptom of oblivion of being" ("Letter to 'Humanism'" 258).

In his *Discourse on Thinking*, Heidegger argues that "the *rootedness*, the *autochthony*, of man is threatened today at its core" and he expresses his view that the "loss of autochthony springs from the spirit of the age into which all of us were born" (48–49, original emphasis). However, Heidegger calls for a certain "[r]eleasement toward things [i.e. *Gelassenheit zu den Dingen*] and openness to the mystery" convinced that these two elements "grant us the possibility of dwelling in the world in a totally different way" and "give us a vision of a new autochthony which someday even might be fit to recapture the old and now rapidly disappearing autochthony in a changed form" (55). However, Beckett's characters completely lack this releasement toward things and they fail to embrace a world whose ultimate meaning cannot be grasped. Life in Beckett is all suffering and misery: the characters constantly yearn for order and redemption, while – at the same time – deeply distrusting the very same concepts.

Summarising, in Anglo-Irish literature, the same change of paradigm can be observed as developed by Habermas in his study of the public sphere. Much of Anglo-Irish writing is concerned with *re*telling or *re*inventing Irish history because the public authorities, or those in control of the public voice, keep hiding the truth, either because the truth threatens them or because they are indeed unaware of the truth. And yet, the unspoken and hidden side cannot be repressed; it emerges again and again. What was first known or discussed within the private realm is voiced in literature. Literature becomes the space where the discourse of authority is systematically undermined and where – especially since Joyce – people's intimate fantasies, emotions, feelings as well as their subjective truths are laid open. Being informed of the various characters' private versions of truth, the reader or the theatre audience serve as Habermas' political public sphere. The earliest Irish poems, quoted above, show that the Irish population did not intend to change the power distribution within the country, but took a more radical approach by rejecting the English presence as such. In the twentieth century, Anglo-Irish literature system-

atically brings to light the most intimate and private realm. In this sense, the writers developed a public sphere within the private realm while, in cases such as Synge's account of the Aran Islands, trying to retain the sphere of intimacy. Unanimously though, the Anglo-Irish authors – independent of their different methods and convictions – wanted to uncover the immense private space that had been hidden from the colonisers and kept silent, suggesting that this is quintessentially the space of true Irishness. Using Freud's language of intimacy, Joyce was the first author who finally tried to illustrate the dictates of his characters' hearts and feelings in as precise a manner as possible and who was, hence, willing to unveil even the most intimate and private realm of the Irish soul.

IV. The Public and the Private in Brian Friel's Oeuvre: A Question of Power

At the core of Brian Friel's writing, there are the multifaceted emotions, fears and sensations of the individual. The playwright's deep interest in his characters' mind-set and his manifold approaches to disclose their private space in an attempt to uncover what really stirs or troubles them – both publicly and privately – strongly link his texts to the interior monologues in James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Moreover, the characters' strong sense of displacement and alienation within their own homes firmly places the dramatist among those Anglo-Irish writers whose, mainly postcolonial, texts are essentially concerned with space and the representation of the Irish population. Similar to the texts discussed in the previous chapter, which publicise their characters' private points of view in order to regain autonomy, Friel's writing invariably reclaims (linguistic) power, independence, and space for his main protagonists.

In fact, Friel's preoccupation with place and space has been widely discussed, and I fully agree with Corbett's view that, in Friel's writing, "the setting is as important and resonant as the words" (71).[1] Although recognising the impact Friel's work has had internationally, Higgins calls him "a 'rooted man'" and stresses his position as "a local playwright [...] in terms of his examination of place as a 'past-marked prospect' and in his exploration of specifically Irish concerns and experiences" (1). Higgins' reading of Friel recalls Niel's interpretation, in which the critic claims that, in Friel's work, present and future spaces are shaped by "an intrusion of the past" ("Non-Realistic Techniques" 353). Thus, the fact that Friel's characters live in a postcolonial environment and speak a language, which, according to Stephen Dedalus, is the colonisers' before it is their own considerably influences the way in which they perceive themselves and experience the world around them (Joyce, *A Portrait* 194).[2]

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1 According to Dantanus, "[t]he relation between the Irish writer and his locality is always of vital interest and seems singularly significant in the work of Brian Friel" (15). Apart from commenting on Friel's fascination with space, Dantanus also quotes Maxwell, Foster and Deane's remarks on the same subject where they comment on the significance of Friel's predominant setting in the borderland between Derry and Donegal (15).

2 In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Stephen Dedalus explains to the dean that from his point of view "[t]he language in which we are speaking is his [i. e. the coloniser's] before it is mine. How different are the words *home*, *Christ*, *ale*, *master*, on his lips and on mine! I cannot speak or write these words without unrest of spirit. His language, so familiar and so foreign, will always be for me an acquired speech. I have not made or accepted its words. My voice holds them at bay. My soul frets in the shadow of his language" (194; original emphasis). In the course of his career, Friel has come to share the view expressed by Stephen Dedalus. In fact,

Taking two of the reasons into consideration why Higgins emphasises Friel's rootedness, namely the plays' rural Irish settings and the strong focal point on Irish (peasant) life, it is not surprising that a considerable number of Friel's early works was first staged by the Abbey Theatre. After all, Friel's plays are consistent with the desire of the founders of the Irish National Theatre, Yeats and Lady Gregory, "to bring upon the stage the deeper thoughts and emotions of Ireland" in order to "show that Ireland is not the home of buffoonery and of easy sentiment" (Lady Gregory 378).[3] Furthermore, Friel's writing answers Yeats' call to stage plays in the Irish National Theatre which, rather than being propagandist, "create a unifying identity for Ireland by challenging the audience's understanding of Irish life" (Cusack 15).

Friel's texts indeed defy classification as pastorals of Irish life. Despite Friel's active participation in the nation's myth-making, his plays are invariably peopled with characters who either feel uprooted or displaced and who are, as a result of this notion, not at ease in the space they inhabit. Furthermore, they often find themselves on the verge of a personal, historical, cultural or political crisis. The audience, for instance, witnesses the heart-breaking circumstances leading to Gar O'Donnell's impending emigration in *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* and the failed homecoming of the eponymous protagonist in *The Loves of Cass McGuire*, whereas *Dancing at Lughnasa* portrays the decay of the Mundy family and *Translations* the disintegration of an entire village. Hence, the harsh and at times disturbing Irish realities which are representative of the characters in Friel's plays illustrate the playwright's point of view that "beneath the patina of Hiltonesque hotels and intercontinental jet airports and mohair suits and private swimming pools" the Irish have remained "a peasant people" whose minds are characterised firstly by "a passion for the land" and secondly by "a paranoiac individualism" ("Plays Peasant" 52).

Friel's play *The Freedom of the City* (1973) serves as a rare example in his oeuvre in which a recent political phenomenon is directly illustrated. The turmoil surrounding the release of the Widgery report on the incidents of Bloody Sunday on 30 January 1972 induced the playwright to exploit the

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Friel's plays reveal an increasing uneasiness about the use of English. In an interview with Ciaran Carty, talking about his play *Translations*, Friel claims that "in some way that's what the play is about: having to use a language that isn't our own. But I'm not talking about the revival of the Irish language. I'm just talking about the language we have now and what use we make of it and about the problems that having it gives us. The assumption, for instance, is that we speak the same language as England. And we don't" (80).

[3] Yeats and Lady Gregory's attempt once more recalls and, at the same time, dismisses the concept of the stage-Irishman, where on the English-language stage Irish characters after Captain Macmorris in Shakespeare's *Henry V* were invariably presented as uneducated servants or vainglorious and savage soldiers. (For a more detailed discussion of the concepts of the "stage-Irishman" and the "Irish bull" on British stages compare Chapter III (p. 37–40).

theme of manipulating the "truth by public and private discourses" (Higgins 31).[4] In 1980, a few years after the actual incident, trying, on the one hand, to address the Troubles in a "socially, morally and creatively responsible" manner (Richtarik, "Field Day" 191) and, on the other hand, to "reclaim [...] inheritance" (O'Toole 106), Friel became one of the founding members of the theatre company Field Day.[5] Together with Stephen Rea, he decided to premiere the company's first production, his pre-famine play, *Translations*, not in the Abbey Theatre in Dublin like most of his previous plays but in the Guildhall of his former hometown Derry, the same place the civil right marchers had aimed for on Bloody Sunday and the setting where Friel's characters in the play *The Freedom of the City* were shot dead after seeking shelter inside the building.

While Roche is another critic who, in his introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to Brian Friel*, highlights the dramatist's significance in Ireland, he does not fail to emphasise the universality of the themes addressed in Friel's oeuvre. Indicating that "[e]xcepting Beckett (who remains a special case),

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4 In an interview with Eavan Boland in 1973, Friel insisted that *The Freedom of the City* had wrongly been interpreted as a play "about Bloody Sunday" (57). He claimed that the play was really "about poverty" (58), a theme which he had been "working on [...] for about ten months before Bloody Sunday. And then Bloody Sunday happened, and the play [...] suddenly found a focus" (57). As indicated above, none of the other plays in Friel's oeuvre can be traced down to an event in contemporary Irish history in a similar way. In 1986, when talking to Laurence Finnegan, Friel referred to the play as "reckless" and "ill-considered [...] because it was written out of the kind of anger at the Bloody Sunday events in Derry" (125). He admitted that although he didn't "regret" writing the play he "certainly wouldn't do it" again (125). Albeit the fact that the actual Widgery report on the events of 30 January 1972 might have evoked strong emotions in Friel and thus may have influenced the outcome of the play, I would argue that the play also serves as a prime example of how truth can be distorted or repressed depending on how powerful or powerless the actual speaker is. (For a more detailed discussion of the play compare Chapter IV (p. 118–121 and 136–139).

5 Shortly after founding the company, Stephen Rea and Brian Friel invited Seamus Heaney, Tom Paulin, Seamus Deane and David Hammond to join "the enterprise" (O'Malley 5). Recalling their first meeting, Heaney hints at what united the different members of the new Field Day board: "We believed we could build something of value, a space in which we would try to redefine what being Irish meant in the context of what [had] happened in the North over the past 20 years, the relationship of Irish nationalism and culture" (as quoted by Richtarik, *Acting* 68). Taking up what Heaney had said, Deane explained that they aimed at "interrogating the relationship between culture and authority [...] by looking at language" (as quoted by O'Malley 1). Borrowing the concept of a *fifth province* from the editors of *The Crane Bag*, Friel admitted that the concept might well be one "of the mind," but one "through which we hope to devise another way of looking at Ireland, or another possible Ireland – an Ireland that first must be articulated, spoken, written, painted, sung but then may be legislated for" (as quoted by Szabo 6). Summarising their intentions, O'Malley stresses the directors' attempt to "provide an analytical dismantling of colonial stereotypes in Ireland," the predominant one between Ireland and Britain being, quoting Deane's words, "the four-hundred-year-old distinction between barbarians and civilians" (9).

Brian Friel is the most important Irish playwright in terms both of dramatic achievement and cultural importance to have emerged since the Abbey Theatre's heyday," Roche acknowledges Friel's rootedness in the Irish context and stresses his crucial role for the country (1). At the same time, however, the critic underlines that Friel's plays "while remaining true to the local, [...] provide a set of dramatic, philosophical and political contexts by which they have been translated worldwide into a rich variety of languages and cultures" (5). In fact, O'Brien takes a similar stand when he emphasises that "the appeal of his [i.e. Friel's] thought and art is not confined to one particular audience" and that Friel's writing successfully draws "attention to the general human dimension of Irish experience rather than to the specifically Irish character of human experience" (*Friel* viii).

Being asked at an early stage of his career to comment on the role of place in his work, Friel himself declared that he kept a strong "memory of atmosphere," be it "[t]he atmosphere of a place or the atmosphere of a person" ("Interview Morison" 7). The ambiance of Friel's settings – covering a time from the pre-famine era to the present – and the personality of his characters can differ markedly, despite the fact that the overwhelming majority of his plays are set in the fictional towns of Ballybeg (Baile Beag, small town) or more rarely of Ballymore (Baile Mor, big town), in County Donegal. While most critics have translated *baile* as 'town,' the term also denotes 'home' or 'home place' thus pinpointing the characters' initial rootedness in the area and their having lost this strong sense of belonging ("Baile" 16). Friel's insistence on the same setting indicates that Ballybeg functions as prime example of a minute and isolated Irish village which is revisited over time in his various plays and where, as O'Brien puts it, different inhabitants of this "generic, archetypal, small, remote, rural community" are introduced in turn (*Friel* 28). In Friel's writing, the archetypal community of Ballybeg thus either "becomes the microcosm of contemporary Ireland" with the village depicting "a clearly identifiable 'spirit of place'" (Dantanus 16), or, as I would argue, along with critics such as Andrews, Pine and Grant who all put a strong emphasis on Friel's universality and the deeply human dimension of his predominant themes, "emblematic of *all* such places" (Pine, *Diviner* 45, original emphasis).

At times, the spirit of place identified by Dantanus is indeed utilised in a symbolic manner: in *Aristocrats*, for instance, the action takes place in the "Ballybeg Hall, the home of District Justice O'Donnell, a large and decaying house overlooking the village of Ballybeg, County Donegal, Ireland" (251). While the word "overlooking" points to the social superiority of the O'Donnell family in comparison to the rest of Ballybeg, the "decaying house" reveals that the successful times of the family are a reminiscence of the past. The family's feeling of superiority is based on a myth of grandeur which has long

been lost.[6] In fact, *Aristocrats* is a play in which the house, the family and the "old order [are] disintegrating" at the same time (Andrews, "Fifth Province" 42).

Wonderful Tennessee is another play in which the setting has a deeper significance. Taking his wife and four relatives on a mystery tour to celebrate his birthday, Terry plans on spending the night on the small Oileán Draíochta, the Island of "Otherness" and of "Mystery," on which he has had an option for the past two months (*Tennessee* 369). However, when the three couples become stranded outside Ballybeg, Terry's sister, Trish, wonders where exactly they have landed. In the following short exchange between the different characters of the play, the symbolic meaning of the setting is discussed openly:

TRISH. Where are we, Terry?
FRANK. Arcadia.
TERRY. Ballybeg pier – where the boat picks us up.
TRISH. County what?
TERRY. County Donegal.
TRISH. God. Bloody Indian territory. (356)

Whereas Frank is amazed by the beauty of the landscape and compares the rural character of Ballybeg to "Arcadia," the heavenly and idyllic place in the Greek countryside known as a site of happiness and security, Terry clarifies that this pastoral setting is, in fact, part of County Donegal. Trish's phrase, "God. Bloody Indian territory," underlines the sublime nature of the landscape and reveals to what extent she has internalised British imperialist thinking.[7] If Ballybeg is not an Arcadian or Edenic spot and is far away

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6 In my chapter on Anglo-Irish representations of space, I have refrained from closely examining the "Big House," although Friel's plays *Aristocrats* and *The Home Place*, for instance, are set against this background. However, as Corbett points out, "[t]he 'Big House' was the symbol of the English Protestant ascendancy and has its own place in Irish literature, chronicled by Somerville and Ross, Elizabeth Bowen, Jennifer Johnston, and others. Squiredom was a factor of life in Britain also, but in Ireland there was the added factor that the Big House tended to be emblematic of a dominant alien presence. They [i.e. the owners] were largely Protestant, gentrified, and separated from locals by class and wealth" (74). Thus, unlike Friel's play *Aristocrats*, which centres round a Catholic family of the upper class, the typical Big House voice in Ireland represents the voice of those representing the *self* rather than the hidden, postcolonial voice unveiling the unknown and private truth – the view of the Irish *other* – which is the main focus of my study. As my reading of the play will show, Friel's focus in *The Home Place* is more on the local Irish population and the effect that the onset of their civil unrest at the beginning of the Land Wars has on the Protestant gentry and their understanding of the positions which they obtain within society. (For a discussion of the play, compare Chapter IV (p. 163 – 170)).

7 The term "sublime" is used in Edmund Burke's sense as denoting terror and astonishment, or that which has an awe-inspiring effect on the character: "The passion caused by the great and sublime in *nature*, when those causes operate most powerfully, is Astonishment: and

from the centre of her universe, it must be a wild and uncivilised place. Thus, her choice of wording further emphasises that the friends have crossed the frontier and moved from the civilised and cultivated world to the adventurous ground of their mystery tour. Indirectly, her phrase repeats the British claim that England is culturally superior to Ireland. Although Ballybeg is no longer a colonised space at the time the three couples visit the place on their mystery tour, County Donegal, as judged by Trish's standards, is still an area beyond human society and culture which is represented by wilderness and *otherness*. In a postcolonial society such as Ireland, Trish's expression, therefore, illustrates Kiberd's claim that it is harder "to decolonize the mind than the territory" (*Inventing Ireland* 6).

The symbolic associations with Ballybeg are complicated even further when Terry's revelation that he has been tempted to buy the island causes Frank, Terry's brother-in-law, to change his mind and connote the site with *home*. Regardless of Trish's point of view, he exclaims excitedly: "This is no mystery tour he's taking us on – he's taking us *home*! Wonderful, Terry" (378, my emphasis). For Frank, the place that he has just compared to "Arcadia" and that represents "[b]loody Indian territory" to Trish connects them with their own roots and cultural heritage. Insofar as Terry has had an option on and to some degree control over the land, the island should be regarded as their possession and home.

Indicating that the word "Draíochta" actually refers to "[t]he wonderful – the sacred – the mysterious" aspect of mystery, rather than to the "spooky" element which Trish associates with the term, Berna, Terry's wife, adopts Frank's positive, symbolic interpretations of the setting as an Edenic place or as their home (*Tennessee* 369). Nevertheless, the uncanny impression hinted at by Trish is intensified when Terry informs the other characters that on this small island, which they can vaguely discern from the Irish shore, a young man called Sean O'Boyle was – according to rumours – "dismembered" by his "close friends" in a ritual killing in 1932 (425). Disgusted by her brother's crime story, Trish reproaches Terry for even considering buying "an evil place like that" and bringing his friends there (427). Ironically, the three couples never reach their final destination. Just as Vladimir and Estragon await Godot's arrival in vain, the boatman Carlin, who is supposed to row them across to the island for the night, fails to arrive. Overlooking Oileán Draíochta from the Irish shore outside Ballybeg, the group, according to the stage directions, are forced to celebrate Terry's birthday "*on a remote pier in north-west Donegal*" which "*was built in 1905 but has not been used since the hinterland*

astonishment is that state of the soul, in which all its motions are suspended, with some degree of horror" (Burke 53, original emphasis).

became depopulated many decades ago" (344). Stuck in Ballybeg, a place whose culture and atmosphere was lost when the local inhabitants left the area, the mysterious place of Terry's childhood and dreams remains an inaccessible space or a fata morgana for the characters.

A symbolic message is finally conveyed by the "home of the Mundy family" in *Dancing at Lughnasa*, which is said to lie "two miles outside the village of Ballybeg" (3). The setting already turns the characters into outsiders; the plot further illustrates that the family are not fully integrated in the community of Ballybeg and that much of their private life is governed by public pressure.[8] Ironically enough, Kate Mundy, who suffers from the low esteem in which her family is held by the Ballybeg community, likewise regards people with contempt who live even further away from Ballybeg – her centre of the universe – than she and her sisters do. In fact, she refers to "those people from the back hills" who happen to organise the annual Festival of Lughnasa, which her four sisters daydream of attending, as "savages" (29). In this setting, where the inhabitants' moral and religious standards are presented as dependent on how far one is removed from the centre, the place name *Ballybeg* "could also be interpreted in the pejorative sense of a rigid and conservative mindset" insofar as any deviation from the norm is considered potentially harmful and, therefore, negative in this society (Jones 7).

Thus, Ballybeg serves as a prime example of a society of which Sofsky says that "[a]mong the worst enemies of freedom is, in addition to power, social condensation" (31). In Ballybeg, a place where all residents know each other and their habits, alternative lifestyles or *otherness* are always under scrutiny and "privacy can scarcely be maintained" (32). As the members of the communities depicted by Friel tend to observe or survey one another as well as any change or development within their social system, social condensation and power, the two key aspects identified by Sofsky, indeed influence what the characters discuss both publicly and privately and how they address each other or the audience. This atmosphere of social surveillance combined with the characters' utter inability to articulate themselves and to share true intimacy and familiarity with those who surround them increases the sense of isolation and alienation within their homes or the village.

In an attempt to define who they are to others and to themselves, Friel's characters, therefore, constantly publicise their private truths. By doing so, they display an ontological need to grasp and express their identity and to desperately make themselves understood. Thus, private and public space and the effects these realms have on each other not only are at the centre of Friel's writing, but they are also closely linked to the production of truth – both

[8] This aspect will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter IV (p. 140–144).

collective and individual. Once more, the distinction between the public and the private issue, therefore, goes beyond the spatial dimension and refers to a cultural, psychological or emotional question. As the characters feel alienated or misunderstood within their home or community, Ballybeg comes to function as an archetypal playground for a society whose characters are involved in a permanent process of narrativisation to articulate their personal point of view, to fight heteronomy and to oppose dominant discourse.

Studying public and private discourses in Friel, one sees that different shades of power relations within the characters' home, family and community manifest themselves; objective truth in his plays is irrevocably replaced by different – private – versions of truth and experiences. Thus, in many of Friel's plays, final meaning is constantly deferred and, as Niel rightly points out, reality is necessarily "subjective and never logical" ("Non-Realistic Techniques" 359). In fact, Friel's plays exemplify Foucault's notion that

> truth isn't outside power, or lacking in power [...]. Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its régime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true. ("Truth and Power" 131)

In Friel's writing, personal bias is often shown to shape a character's point of view. For the audience or the reader, objective truth therefore turns into a chimera as the "competing versions of the truth" with which they are presented generally remain unverifiable (Grant 11).

Although Friel's plays uncover mechanisms of power at work, the texts are, most importantly, concerned with unveiling the *other* or the hidden. Spelling out the truths of the powerless and suppressed characters, Friel's plays give public recognition and power to the socially underprivileged groups or, in Andrews' words, to the "radically marginalised or interstitial figures" whose discourse generally tends to have less impact than the discourse of their powerful opponents (*Art* 2). Consequently, the notion of power in Friel's writing is of utmost importance, and it is predominantly a negative entity. In fact, each positive aspect tends to be overshadowed by a stronger negative element of power, regardless of whether it is the power of healing (in *Faith Healer*), of language (in *Translations*), of love (in *Lovers*), of music (in *Dancing at Lughnasa*) or of imagination (in *Molly Sweeney*).

Whereas familiarity and intimacy among the inhabitants might be expected to be very strong in a community as densely knit as the one in

Ballybeg, society more often than not functions as a strong source of friction and unhappiness in Friel's oeuvre. Unease and a phenomenon which is identified by Higgins as an "impossibility of dialogue in the isolation of selfhood" (54) and which is described by Corbett as "the evident discontinuity of communication" (3) actually constitute the norm in Ballybeg. Summarising, then, Ballybeg is a place in Friel's oeuvre that is not easily left in spite of the suffering and misery experienced by a majority of its inhabitants. At the same time, however, the village is repeatedly presented as a place of homecoming that fails to fulfil the expectations of its returnees and shatters their concept of what constitutes *home*. Hence, feeling misunderstood or alienated within their family or community, Friel's characters start to share their secrets or their inner self with the audience trying to justify their own perspectives, behaviour and actions. The society depicted in Ballybeg thus consists of a "hermetic" group whose members are engaged in a permanent act of publicising their inner self and constantly make their private agonies and thoughts public (*Translations* 40). Invariably publicising their most private sentiments and feelings, Friel's characters seem to hope that the innermost core of their identity will eventually be grasped, which will help them feel 'at home' and 'whole' again. Nevertheless, the strong sense of introspection that defines the lives of most characters in Friel's plays predominantly fails to be translated into a sense of homeliness and harmony with other members of the family and community. As a result of this lack of unity among the different inhabitants of Ballybeg, the village is peopled with characters that struggle with the loneliness of their *Dasein* as well as the lacking sense of relational and spatial belonging.

1. Power and (Meta-)Theatrical Aspects

In Brian Friel's dramatic work, the question of publicness and privateness is not only a key issue with regard to the analysis of the content but also the form. In fact, the form often shapes the content in Friel's plays insofar as subtle dramaturgical techniques influence and to some extent even control what the audience learns about a character's public or private realm. Examining the role of *memory* in Friel's writing, Emmert refers to some of the dramaturgical practices by means of which the past generates a character's behaviour or action in the present as "forms of interiorisation" (23, my translation).[9] Although I agree that these techniques, such as the introduction of different narrative voices whose private memories or experiences are re-enacted before

[9] Original: Mittel der Verinnerlichung (23).

the audience's eyes or the splitting of a character into his public and his private self, are characterised by a strong element of introspection on the level of the plot, with regard to the form of the play, I would argue that on stage they, paradoxically, function as forms of exteriorisation. After all, these dramaturgical devices, for example, allow protagonists (such as Gar O'Donnell in *Philadelphia, Here I Come!*) to publicise their privateness and disclose their intimate truth to the audience.[10] Other characters (such as Gar's father and their housekeeper, Madge), however, are, as a result of the dramaturgical setup of the play, compelled to keep their thoughts or truths to themselves; their private core remains hidden from the audience, who is only granted access to their public selves.

Addressing theoretical considerations of form in his lecture on "The Theatre of Hope and Despair," held in 1967, Friel dismisses the unity of place, time and action in drama as he believes the concept of the Aristotelian unities has lost its credibility in modern society:

> [T]he days of the solid, well-made play are gone, the play with a beginning, a middle, and an end, where in Act I a dozen carefully balanced characters are thrown into an arena and are presented with a problem, where in Act II they attack the problem and one another according to the Queensberry Rules of Drama, and in Act III the problem is cosily resolved and all concerned are a lot wiser, a little nobler, and preferably a bit sadder. And these plays are finished because we know that life is about as remote from a presentation-problem-resolution cycle as it can be. (22)

Emphasising that "flux is the only constant" in contemporary drama, Friel draws attention to the immense significance of uncertainty in his work (22); in fact, in his play *Give Me Your Answer, Do!* Daisy Connolly identifies uncertainty as the driving force in the professional writing of her husband Tom Connolly. She explains that, as an artist, "uncertainty is necessary. He [i.e. Tom, a novelist] must live with that uncertainty, that necessary uncertainty. Because there can be no verdicts, no answers. Indeed there *must* be no verdicts" (*Give* 79, original emphasis). As a result of the above-mentioned paradox that fluidity is the only permanent feature in his writing, Friel has widely experimented with Brechtian effects and dramaturgical innovations. This has caused Tillinghast to stress Friel's unique position in Anglo-Irish drama in this respect (36).[11] Discussing some of Friel's dramaturgical innovations, Niel

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[10] In *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* the main protagonist, Gar, is represented by two different actors on stage, namely by Public Gar, who talks to the other characters on stage, and by his *alter ego*, Private Gar, who provides the audience with Public Gar's unspoken thoughts, gives voice to his numerous fears or insecurities and challenges Public Gar's inarticulateness and his passive manner.

[11] Friel's modern style of drama has been rebuked by critics such as Hogan, who referred to Friel's innovations as "neo-Expressionistic crutches and neo-Brechtian gimmicks" (as quoted

has identified "the abandonment of a logical and chronological presentation of events, direct addressing of the audience, comments, songs [...]" as some of the methods which Friel exploited to establish new forms of drama, more apt to present the woes and sorrows of his characters ("Non-Realistic Techniques" 351).[12]

In my opinion, one of the more conspicuous dramaturgical devices used by Friel is the conscious undermining or shattering of the dramatic illusion of reality. It allows characters, such as those, for instance, in *The Loves of Cass McGuire* (15) or in *Living Quarters* (188), to address the audience directly in order to denounce the truth or cast doubt upon the atmosphere of a scene that has just been staged. Due to these characters' interventions, the audience is presented with multiple perspectives and more than one version of truth. Consequently, the audience has to ponder and judge each character's trustworthiness in the play and is, therefore, in a Brechtian sense, directly involved in creating the meaning of the drama. As the different characters' personal perspectives are contradictory in nature, *truth* and *reality* are necessarily turned into two highly problematic concepts in Friel's oeuvre.

Although the main protagonist at the beginning of *The Loves of Cass McGuire* is reported to still be asleep, the woman's behaviour is – through indirect presentation – shown to be a source of utter embarrassment for the family. By the time Cass McGuire first appears on stage, the audience has already been introduced to her as "*a tall, bulky woman of seventy*" who "*smokes incessantly and talks loudly and coarsely*" (*Cass* 14). Cass, who "appeared out of the blue after fifty-two years," is a "returned Yankee" who has recently moved in

by O'Brien, *Friel* 52). Referring to Hogan's comment as "not only unhelpful but also uninformed" (87), Dantanus then offers – as have indeed Kearney and O'Brien – a valuable analysis of the various dramaturgical techniques introduced in Friel's oeuvre over the years (Dantanus 84–152, Kearney 77–116, O'Brien, *Friel* 52–74). In his analysis, Dantanus criticises that the term 'experimental' has repeatedly been used to refer to Friel's plays. He points out that "only comparatively few of his plays are 'experimental' in any genuine sense" (85). He goes on to suggest that "Friel's drama is more 'original' than 'experimental'," concluding that "[a] great deal [could] be learnt by approaching some of his [i. e. Friel's] plays via the classical theatre of Greece. [...] Brecht or no Brecht, Pirandello or no Pirandello, many of the techniques used by Friel in his plays cannot be understood solely in terms of the modern theatre" (87–89). Although I share his view concerning the influence of the Greek chorus in Friel's work and would agree that Friel's plays are not experimental "in any genuine sense," I have, nonetheless, decided to use the term to underline the playwright's constant search for new forms and dramaturgical innovations to open up space for alternative versions of truth.

12 I fully agree with Niel that Friel's Brechtian effects are not normally meant to accomplish an alienating effect but to evoke a feeling of empathy in the audience for his characters who are shown to be imprisoned in their own worlds and perceptions ("Brian Friel" 42).

with her brother's family (15–16). As a result of her brother Harry's inquiries, both the family and the audience are informed that Cass spent the previous night in the pub ravaging the place after a few drinks and mudding her shoes when visiting the cemetery. Cass' nephew, Dom, seems to have some affection for his aunt; he offers to "bring up her tray" and mentions his buying "a bar of chocolate for her" (12). However, Dom's interest in Cass might actually originate in a fascination with her unruly behaviour, as he reveals to his mother that he "could hear her [i.e. Cass] singing at the top of her voice half the night" (12). Despite the discrepant awareness – Cass cannot know what exactly was discussed while she was asleep/offstage – she immediately senses how she has been portrayed when she appears on stage. Her usage of the third person pronoun to talk about the other characters indicates that her meta-theatrical comment, a justification for having missed the beginning of the play, is directed towards the audience:

> CASS. What the hell goes on here?
> ALICE. Cass —!
> HARRY. Cass, you can't break in, Cass, at —!
> *Cass addresses the audience directly. They are her friends, her intimates. The other people on stage are interlopers.*
> CASS. Cass! Cass! Cass! I go to the ur-eye-nal for five minutes and they try to pull a quick one on me! (15)

In order to silence Cass' protest at how she has just been treated by the other actors/members of the family, her brother Harry likewise breaks the theatrical illusion in a rather casual way: "The story has begun, Cass" (15). His statement reveals that, although the exposition has taken place without her, it cannot be undone. Moreover, Harry does not seem enthusiastic about the prospect of Cass establishing too close a relationship with the audience and offering her personal point of view – a point of view beyond his control. However, as the main protagonist, Cass insists on her unique position in the play. In her meta-theatrical comment, she demands unrestricted power over the scenes and her presentation: "The story begins where I say it begins, and I say it begins with me stuck in the gawddam workhouse! So you can all get the hell outa here!" (15) Trying to maintain control over the scenes, Harry dismisses her statement by claiming that "[t]he story begins in the living-room of my home, a week after your return to Ireland. This is my living-room and we're going to show bit by bit how you came –" (15). Taking up her brother's introductory remarks in a perfectly matter-of-fact voice, Cass fights back by adding a piece of truth which is too honest and open to correspond with what Harry must have had in mind and what he would have presented as the official truth of the family:

> CASS. (*Looking around set*) Sure! Real nice and cosy! (*Directly to audience*) The home of my brother, Mister Harold McGuire, accountant, brick manufacturer, big-deal Irish businessman. Married to Alice, only child of Joe Connor, the lawyer, who couldn't keep his hands off young girls. (15)

Embarrassed by her unexpected revelation, Harry summons Cass to be "fair" to his family and to unfold the developments which caused him to "[arrange] for [her] to go into Eden House," a rest home for the elderly, "slowly and in sequence" (15 and 25). However, not only does Cass oppose to Harry's presentation of the events, but she also dislikes her new home, where, to use Kilroy's expression, the family has decided to "dump" her (13):

> CASS. So we're going to skip all that early stuff, all the explanations, all the excuses, and we'll start off later in the story – from here. (*Light up bed area*) My suite in the workhouse, folks. Drop in and see me some time, okay? Where the hell was I? (*Remembering*) Yeah – the homecoming – back to the little green isle. Well, that's all over and done with – history; and in my book yesterday's dead and gone and forgotten. So let's pick it up from there, with me in the . . . rest home. (*To Harry who is about to go off stage*) Go ahead and call out the National Guard if you like; but you're not going to move me! What's this goddam play called? *The Loves of Cass McGuire*. Who's Cass McGuire? Me! Me! And they'll [i. e. the audience] see what happens in the order *I* want them to see it; and there will be no going back into the past! (*Cass* 16, original emphasis)

Cass' dismissal of the past once more draws attention to the fact that what the audience knows or thinks of a character is firmly guided by dramaturgical choices or decisions. Telling a story from a certain character's perspective at the same time means silencing other aspects or leaving them untold. Even a private and true story unfolded before the eyes of the audience is really only one version of truth – there are many other valuable aspects or perspectives which remain perfectly concealed. Engaged in a debate about what scenes should be enacted on stage and which "explanations" or "excuses" they will "skip," Harry and Cass once more undermine the dramatic illusion of reality (16). Moreover, the entire linguistic battle between the two "rival storytellers," Harry and Cass, emphasizes how crucial the order of appearance on stage is (Higgins 15). As a result of having been presented indirectly by her brother's family before she appears on stage, Cass spends the rest of the play "having an odd word with the folks out there," and trying to develop an intimate relation with the audience (*Cass* 29). From a dramaturgical point of view, Cass could be seen to do so in order to put herself in a more favourable light and undo some of the damage inflicted upon her during the exposition. With regard to the content of the play, however, Cass is shown to hope that by

expressing "her desperate longing for love and happiness" as well as by sharing her intimate and personal thoughts, feelings or sorrows with the audience, she will gain the confidence, warmth, love, understanding and sympathy of the audience which her brother's family have failed to offer to her since her return from the States (Niel, "Non-Realistic Techniques" 356).

Apart from undermining the dramatic illusion of reality, as one of his most frequently applied techniques, Friel has reduced the degree of mimesis – according to Potolsky, the "physical act of miming or mimicking something" – in his plays (2).[13] Instead, the playwright integrated narratological elements, which are not normally associated with drama. Friel's stressing narrativity over plot is all the more surprising because, as Kosok argues, Anglo-Irish drama has traditionally put "an exceptional emphasis on *action*" (157, original emphasis). Defining 'narrative' as "a primary act of mind, a way of comprehending and constructing social and psychic life," Hardy explains that drama is normally described as being "active, interactive, extrovert, many-voiced, mobile, gestural and immediate" (24–25). Narratives, on the other hand, are normally considered "inactive, introvert, single-voiced, quiet, retrospective or prospective" (25). Applying these definitions to Friel's texts demonstrates that the voices of the vast majority of Friel's characters are, in fact, much more closely associated with narrative than with drama. Friel, who started his writing career publishing short stories and radio plays, has repeatedly been referred to as a great storyteller, a term which directly links him with the old Gaelic tradition of the seanchaithe.[14] Indicating that "[a]s an Irish writer, Brian Friel comes from a rich narrative tradition," Grant further claims that "his drama has continued to display the skill of the master storyteller" (2). Comparing Friel to

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13 The definition of the term *mimesis* offered in *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative* perfectly captures the meaning referred to in this context; *mimesis* is described by Abbott as "[t]he imitation of an action by performance. According to Plato, mimesis is one of the two major ways to convey a narrative, the other being diegesis or the representation of an action by telling. By this distinction, plays are mimetic, epic poems are diegetic. Aristotle [...] used the term 'mimesis' as simply the imitation of an action and included in it both modes of narrative representation" (193, emphasis deleted). While my usage of the term is entirely indebted to Plato, Friel's plays are consequently an enactment of Aristotle's understanding of the term.

14 Seanchaí (plural: seanchaithe) is the "Irish word for a storyteller and repository of tradition" ("Seanchaí," *Brewer's Dictionary* 731). Since the eighteenth century, the "bearer of 'old lore'" has been regarded as "an oral story-teller who possesses a wide repertoire of lore including shorter forms of narrative" ("Seanchaí," *Oxford Companion* 510). Interestingly, not only does the Irish word 'seanchas' refer to the story-tellers' "material – lore and tradition – [...] [but] [t]he term also has the meaning of gossip or chat between individuals" and thus underlines that the "seanchaí was a welcome visitor in most rural homes, especially in the long winters when most céilídhing [i. e. the Ulster name for informal social gatherings] or bothántaíocht [i. e. the Munster name for the same kind of informal evening visiting, including gossip, stories, music or perhaps dancing] took place" ("Seanchas" and "Seanchaí," *Brewer's Dictionary* 732 and 731).

Anton Chekhov, Niel claims that the reduction of plot is characteristic of both writers. Moreover, in their plays, there is a tendency to narrate rather than to present events ("Brian Friel" 40). According to Corbett, in *Faith Healer*, where the three protagonists take it in turns to address the audience in four long monologues, Friel most prominently and for the first time in his career as a dramatist "returns to a native Irish tradition of storytelling" and I fully agree with his conclusion that "[f]or most of his work, he is never far away from it" (114).

Whereas Friel regularly explores different forms of mediation between his characters and the audience, no such mediators are found in classical drama. Tendencies to incorporate an epic element in plays, such as the chorus in classic Greek tragedies, where a group of performers comment "on the action of the play" or interpret "its events from the standpoint of traditional wisdom," only serve as an exception to the rule ("Chorus" 54–55). In Friel, however, mediators or "stage-manager[s]," whose roles have mostly developed beyond those of the Greek chorus, are not only common but also powerful; they occasionally decide whether a character's public or private face is shown, in what order the different scenes are going to be presented and thereby influence how much the audience sympathises with a certain character (Niel, "Non-Realistic Techniques" 354). As a consequence, some of these figures of mediation establish a much more intimate relation with the audience than the rest of the characters. Furthermore, in plays such as *Dancing at Lughnasa* as well as in "Winners" and "Losers" (*Lovers*), commentators or narrators – both heterodiegetic and homodiegetic – are introduced to elaborate on or to provide background information to the events presented on stage.[15] In the case of "Winners," the two heterodiegetic commentators' neutral reports describing the death of the two teenagers, Mag (Margaret Mary Enright) and Joe (Joseph Michael Brennan), sharply contrast with the scenes enacted on stage allowing the audience to witness some of the situations described by the commentators. The play, therefore, painfully illustrates how dominant public discourse runs the risk of silencing the private and powerless voices whenever conflicting versions of truth exist.[16] Summarising then,

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15 I will use the terminology introduced by Genette and then taken over by Rimmon-Kenan, despite the fact that in both of these works the terms refer to positions in narrative texts exclusively. However, as these terms describe the positions obtained by the characters in Friel's plays and therefore fully serve my purpose, I have nonetheless decided to adapt the terms and apply them to Brian Friel's dramatic work, so I refer to a 'heterodiegetic narrator' as one who "does not participate in the story" he narrates, whereas the term 'homodiegetic narrator' designates "one who takes part in it, at least in some manifestations of his 'self'" (Rimmon-Kenan 95).

16 A close reading of this play will follow later in this chapter (p. 118–119).

although Friel has used different kinds of mediation and narrative figures throughout his career, the functions these characters fulfil in the individual plays differ widely.

From a dramatic point of view, *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* is the first play in which Friel has introduced a figure of mediation to meticulously record the main protagonist Gar O'Donnell's emotions and stirrings. In order to capture the character's public statements as well as his personal thoughts, feelings and dictates of his heart the night before his emigration to Philadelphia, this character is, as indicated above, represented by two actors on stage: "*The two Gars, Public Gar and Private Gar, are two views of the one man. Public Gar is the Gar that people see, talk to, talk about. Private Gar is the unseen man, the man within, the conscience, the alter ego, the secret thoughts, the id*" (11). Friel's invention of Private Gar, the *alter ego* of the main protagonist Public Gar, who eloquently expresses his thoughts, feelings or anxieties, provides the audience with the unspoken subtext of the monosyllabic conversations which Public Gar has with himself and with the characters by whom he is surrounded. Although the dramaturgical constellation in *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* is quite extraordinary, the phenomenon of distinguishing between one's private and one's public face is only natural: "Our 'public face' is thus that which we allow anyone to see, our 'private side' is that to which we restrict access" and which is often related to "'secrecy'" (Benn and Gaus 8). In Freudian terms, Private Gar can simply be regarded as the externalisation of the unspoken and possibly even unconscious realm of a human being. Having access to Gar's inner self, the audience not only becomes acquainted with the poetic and expressive side of Gar's character but, as Corbett argues, also experiences the young man's countless moments of hesitation witnessing that "[e]ven Gar's communication with himself is difficult" (36). Tillinghast, moreover, highlights that Private Gar's remarks

> delight the audience because they remind us of our own inner commentaries. For Gar O'Donnell himself, though, they serve a complex and ambivalent function. Interior dialogue is, first of all, a survival mechanism in this character who exists as his father's employee in the family grocery and dry-goods business [...]. On the other hand his rich inner life facilitates Gar's further isolation, because it does an outlet for his humor, cynicism, idealism, ambition, and hostility, it prevents him from confronting openly his frustrations in the public arena. (38)

Gar's conversation with himself is helpful and restrictive at the same time. In fact, far from being happy with his life, Private Gar mercilessly unmasks Public Gar's inner self and lays bare what Kilroy describes as the protagonist's "own inner insecurities, his essential innocence and vulnerability before the future that awaits him" and what I would refer to as an unhealthy self-concept (11).

Although Gar – consisting of his public (outer) and his private (inner) self – is the only character to whose thoughts the audience is given full access, his powerful position on stage is not uncontested. Gar's point of view is occasionally questioned by other characters' statements. For example, Madge, who has reared Gar and who has, therefore, had a chance to observe the father-son relationship since the boy was born, mentions that, contrary to Gar's belief, the father's uncommunicative behaviour has nothing to do with his son and must not be interpreted as a lack of interest or love:

> [J]ust because he doesn't say much doesn't mean that he hasn't feelings like the rest of us. […] He said nothing either when your mother died. It must have been near daybreak when he got to sleep last night. I could hear his bed creaking. (*Philadelphia* 20)

From the father's rare utterances and especially from his nonverbal communication, Madge knows that he suffers as much as his son, and she suggests that Gar has inherited his father's inability to share privateness: "And when he's [i. e. Gar] the age the boss is now, he'll turn out just the same. And although I won't be here to see it, you'll find that he's learned nothin' in-between times" (109).

In spite of offering insight to a character's unconscious by introducing the figure of Private Gar, "Gar's part dominates but does not drown out the others" (Maxwell 69). Thus, the unusual dramaturgical constellation draws attention to a void in the play; as soon as the audience is familiarised with the private thoughts of one character, the missing alter ego of all the other characters, their private feelings and notions become significant. The audience's intimate relation to Gar is to a certain extent called into question by this lacuna; after all, the father's non-communicative behaviour is particularly telling in this respect. The night before Gar's departure for America, his father enters from the shop and sits down to read the newspaper. Madge, who looks at him for a while, temporarily loses her composure and confronts him "with his inadequacy and insensitivity" (Jones 34). Bursting into tears, she accuses him of sitting in the kitchen "night after night, year after year, reading that aul paper […]. It – it – it – it just drives me mad, the sight of you!" (*Philadelphia* 67) When she rushes out, Gar's father "*stares after her, then out at the audience. Then, very slowly, he looks down at the paper again – it has been upside down – and turns it right side up. But he can't read. He looks across at Gar's bedroom, sighs, rises, and exits very slowly to the shop*" (67). As he holds the newspaper upside down, too distracted to be able to read the newspaper, Gar's father's non-verbal communication proves that he suffers as much as his son. The stage directions, therefore, imply that S. B. O'Donnell's public face probably hides as sensitive and expressive a character as the one revealed by Private Gar.

The subtle undermining of the seemingly overruling perspective of one character, as witnessed in *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* is a phenomenon exploited once more in *Dancing at Lughnasa*. Michael, who functions as a homodiegetic commentator, accompanies the audience through his "different kinds of memories" as he recalls "that summer of 1936," when he was seven years old (7). Although he does not deliberately mislead the audience, the reconstruction of the period he spent with his mother and aunts depends entirely on his childhood memories. Therefore, the reality presented in the play is far from being objective and does not report the ultimate truth. Concerning the meaning of *history* and *memory* in Friel's work, Emmert explains that

> [t]he […] growing scepticism with regard to an objectification of the past [leads] to the insight that memory and history must be regarded as narrative, re-interpretable constructs of a past which cannot be grasped by actual facts. (203, my translation)[17]

At first sight, Michael's point of view is, in fact, more developed and powerful than anyone else's. However, the audience's impression that Michael's story might be challenged by other characters if they were to express their private thoughts is intensified when he begins to describe the other characters' behaviour and personality and when his memories are re-enacted on stage; hence, a certain dissonance is created. In Michael's eyes, his aunt Kate, "a national schoolteacher and a very proper woman," is rather strict and domineering; moreover, she is shown to have lived according to strong principles or morals (7). Nevertheless, the text in a clever way gradually undermines Michael's power and points to her alternative perspective, which is understood to be equally valuable, although it is not verbalised as directly as Michael's point of view in the play. In fact, witnessing the different events of that summer, the audience gradually learns that Kate seems to have been the only member of the family with a realistic perception of their current situation:

> KATE. You work hard at your job. You try to keep the home together. You perform your duties as best you can – because you believe in responsibilities and obligations and good order. And then suddenly, suddenly you realize that hair cracks are appearing everywhere; that control is slipping away; that the whole thing is so fragile it can't be held together much longer. It's all about to collapse […]. (56)

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17 Original: Die […] wachsende Skepsis hinsichtlich einer Objektivierbarkeit der Vergangenheit [führt] zu der Erkenntnis, dass Erinnerung und Geschichte als narrative, reinterpretierbare Konstrukte einer faktisch nicht fassbaren Vergangenheit betrachtet werden müssen. (203)

Albeit being less playful than the young boy's mother and other aunts, not only does Kate provide the sole regular income of the Mundy family, but, as the confession quoted above indicates, she has also shouldered most of the responsibility in the family and she is the character who is particularly concerned about the well-being of the different members of the family. Portrayed as someone who is deeply dissatisfied with her own status and the situation her family finds itself in as well as someone who has a strong need to be in control of things, Kate was distressed when she realised their life was about to disintegrate. In spite of depicting her from a critical point of view, the adult narrator Michael has to admit that, in fact, his aunt's "forebodings weren't all that inaccurate. Indeed some of them were fulfilled" before the end of that summer in 1936 (64).

Michael's final remarks, then, resemble Kate's gloomy perception: in fact, when they arose in the morning of Michael's "first day back at school," the family learnt that his aunts Rose and Agnes had disappeared during the night because, as the adult narrator puts it, "[t]he Industrial Revolution had finally caught up with Ballybeg" and his aunts' "hand-knitted gloves" were no longer in demand (90–91). Michael's uncle, Father Jack, who had been called back from his missionary work in Africa a few months before because he had adopted the native population's pagan beliefs, felt so uprooted in Ballybeg that "he died suddenly of a heart attack – within a year of his homecoming" (92). Because of Jack's transformation, Kate, his disgraced sister, was made redundant at the end of that summer and Michael's mother, Chris, "spent the rest of her life in the [newly established] knitting factory and hated every day of it" (107). Contemplating the events of that summer fifty-four years later, Michael concludes that as a result of his aunts' disappearance and his uncle's death "the heart [had] seemed to go out of the house" and "much of the spirit and fun had gone out" of his mother and the two other aunts' lives (106–107). Therefore, Kate's worries foreshadow the actual decline of the family and their bleak future: when the narrator finally managed to track his aunts Rose and Agnes down in London years later, he learnt that they "had moved about a lot. They had worked as cleaning women in public toilets, in factories, in the Underground. […] They took to drink; slept in parks, in doorways, on the Thames Embankment" (91). Thus, despite the fond and precious childhood memories which Michael has kept of this summer in 1936, the fact remains that, at exactly this stage in the history of the Mundy family, his home fully disintegrated, the family's reputation became severely tarnished and the aunts' fate began to decline.

The technique of presenting a plot retrospectively, which Friel has made extensive use of in his dramatic work, means that characters, like Michael, who reflect upon their past, are equipped with more knowledge than was available

to them at the time the events actually took place.[18] This retrospective approach, then, paradoxically contains a strong element of foreshadowing. Casting their mind back on events in the past enables these characters to comment on the effect their decisions or behaviour had and to mention what conclusions they drew at a later stage; most importantly, however, this device not only enforces the strong private or personal element in a character's disclosure but also adds depth to their interpretation of situations or actions. Moreover, as a result of the distance the characters have gained since the occurrence of the events, the audience is made to feel that the element of private truth revealed in the narrative is exceptionally strong.

In a number of Friel's plays, dead voices recall certain events on stage which occurred during their lives; due to their metaphysical condition, the characters' descriptions of these incidents often contain an unspoken claim for absolute truth.[19] Nonetheless, Friel skilfully undermines this notion of the absolute by opposing these accounts with alternative versions delivered by other characters. An interesting version of this practice "of having on stage characters that are revealed to be dead" is explored in *Performances* (Tallone 39). In this play, the main protagonist on stage, Leoš Janáček, who is "played by an actor in his fifties or energetic sixties" (3), is supposed to have been dead for quite some time and appears to be fully aware of his fate: "I know when it [i.e. the piece of music "On that Javorina Plain"] was published, don't I? Twenty years after I was buried, for God's sake" (7). Throughout the play, Janáček constantly questions the reliability of private statements he made and the pieces of truth he revealed in some seven hundred letters to Kamila Stösslova during his lifetime. Anezka Ungrova, an "anxious, intense and earnest young" PhD student, writes her thesis based on her conviction that "there must be a connection between the private life and the public work" (6 and 14). She firmly believes that Janáček's artistic output

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18 Favorini defines a play in which "the intention to remember and/or forget comes prominently to the fore, with or without the aid of a remembering narrator; in which the phenomenon of memory is a distinct and central area of the drama's attention; in which memory is presented as a way of knowing the past different from, though not necessarily opposed to, history; or in which memory or forgetting serves as a crucial factor in self-formation and/or self/deconstruction" as a *memory play* (138). With regard to Friel's writing, Emmert uses this term not only for plays such as *Dancing at Lughnasa*, *Molly Sweeney*, or *Faith Healer* but also for plays in which a narrative voice has been introduced and where instances of the remembered past are re-enacted in the consciousness of a homodiegetic figure such as Gar in *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* or Cass in *The Loves of Cass McGuire*.

19 Examples include *The Freedom of the City* and *Faith Healer*, both of which will be discussed below (p. 118–121 and 121–126).

can only be fully understood if one is familiar with his letters and understands his private life:

> In fact, that is the core of my thesis [...]: the relationship between the writing of that piece and those passionate letters from a seventy-four-year-old man to a woman almost forty years younger than him – a married woman with two sons – and what I hope to suggest is that your passion for Kamila Stösslova certainly had a determining effect on that composition and indeed on that whole remarkable burst of creative energy at the very end of your life – probably caused it, for heaven's sake – and only six months away from your death! (15)

The play, however, speaks a different language; Janáček becomes rather irritated with Anezka, who "keeps producing these ridiculous quotations" (12). Disregarding the statements he made in the past, he, at one stage, suggests that "[y]ou invent them, Ms Ungrova, don't you?" (12) Deeply distrusting the power of language and, most importantly, another character's interpretation of his own words, he smashes Anezka's theory that one's private disclosure is more valuable than the artistic, public output. Instead, he advises her to concentrate on his music, the original and not so easily distorted reality:

> Anezka, my dear, you'd learn so much more by just listening to the music. [...] The people who huckster in words merely report on feeling. We *speak* feeling. I remember when I finished it I really thought that – yes! – this time I had solved the great paradox: had created something that was singular to me, uniquely mine, bearing the imprint of my spirit only; and at the same time was made new again in every listener who was attentive and assented to its strange individuality and to its arrogance and indeed to its hesitancies. (*Laughs.*) Vanity. That's what distance lends: clarity. You'll learn that in time, too, Anezka. I promise you. (24–25, original emphasis)

Janáček's comment underlines his point of view that time changes reality and that truth cannot be verbalised, let alone interpreted accurately by another character. Moreover, his statement reveals the composer's deep-seated distrust that his artistic output can be directly related to and explained with his private experiences around the same time.

In *Living Quarters*, another example where a plot is entirely based on retrospection, Sir, an omniscient narrator and commentator, makes extensive use of his position as a godlike figure or mediator between the fictional characters and the audience. O'Brien claims that Sir "embodies a principle of coherence and integration, which is the opposite of the tendency toward dissolution and destruction in actual, so-called historical facts" (*Friel* 90). According to the stage directions at the beginning of the play, "*Sir sits on his stool down left, his ledger closed on his knee*" (*Living* 177). In his opening speech,

Sir informs the audience that the story is set in the "living-quarters of Commander Frank Butler" a few years back and that the characters

> now scattered all over the world, every so often in sudden moments of privacy, of isolation, of panic, [...] remember that day, and in their imagination they reconvene here to reconstruct it – what was said, what was not said, what was done, what was not done, what might have been said, what might have been done; endlessly raking over those dead episodes that can't be left at peace. (177)

Consequently, in this "retrospective of the events," the key points of the plot are public knowledge that all the characters involved agree on, while quite a considerable part of the story concerning feelings or unspoken thoughts is known only by a minority, possibly one character (Countryman 11). Thus their memories may well overlap, but they do not completely match. However, the plot, part of the mind-boggling activity the characters are individually engaged in, is entirely in the hands of Sir, who is in total control of the ledger, "the key to an understanding of *all* that happened" (*Living* 177, original emphasis). Based on the thoughts and impressions that are included in the ledger, a public reality is created. Additional aspects or alternative views are silenced as if they had never existed. Aware of the delicate position in which he finds himself, Sir promises to strictly stick to the ledger and not to (ab)use his power to manipulate any scene:

> [...] they have conceived me – the ultimate arbiter, the powerful and impartial referee, the final adjudicator, a kind of human Hansard who knows those tiny details and interprets them accurately. And yet no sooner do they conceive me with my authority and my knowledge than they begin flirting with the idea of circumventing me, of foxing me, of outwitting me. Curious, isn't it? (177–178)

Not surprisingly, several characters feel misunderstood and disagree with their presentation. They believe that the power of the ledger (represented by Sir), which is superimposed on them, denies their private truths. At the very beginning of the play, Tom, in an attempt to elucidate how he is characterised in the ledger, challenges Sir (179). Helen, on the other hand, in her meta-theatrical comment objects to one scene sensing that her feelings and sensations are not captured truthfully:

> It's not right! [...] It's distorted – inaccurate. [...] The whole atmosphere – three sisters, relaxed, happy, chatting in their father's garden on a sunny afternoon. There was unease – I *remember* – there were shadows – we've got to acknowledge them. (188, original emphasis)

Frank, finally, complains to Sir informing him that he was not permitted to develop his point of view in the play and was therefore treated unfairly

(240–241). Having spoken his mind, Frank begins to move offstage where he will shoot himself as prescribed by the ledger. Suddenly he "*stops and looks around at the others – all isolated, all cocooned in their private thoughts. He opens his mouth as if he is about to address them, but they are so remote from him that he decides against it*" (241). Frank's comment, enhanced by the subsequent stage directions, implies that he has lost faith in communication and presentation; on a textual level, he is presented as isolated and estranged from the other members of the family. From a structural point of view, however, the ledger forces him to act according to the plan and denies him the possibility to remedy the situation and address his children. This reading of the text is reinforced by Tom, who begs Sir to change the "corrupt ledger" and to prevent Frank from committing suicide (241). However, Sir ignores each of these entreaties; there is neither space for Frank's private truth nor for Tom's desire to alter the past. As the written word in the ledger triumphs over the characters' hidden feelings, the audience is in the uneasy position of having to assess the truth; a truth that consists of what the audience sees (public knowledge) as well as of what the audience understands is kept concealed or secret from it (private knowledge).

In "Winners," the first of two stories contained in *Lovers*, and in *The Freedom of the City*, a similar dramaturgical technique has been employed illustrating how widely public knowledge of an event can differ from a character's private experience of the same incident. "Winners," as indicated above, works on two different levels which are intertwined with one another; the love-story between the teenagers, Joe and Mag, is contrasted with the presumably official and neutral report investigating the deaths of the two young lovers. This official account is presented by a male and a female commentator whose reading is described as "*impersonal, completely without emotion; their function is to give information. At no time must they reveal an attitude to their material*" (11). The commentators' rational and carefully phrased assumptions and speculations, which have been referred to by O'Brien as "a framework of generalized objectivity," clash with the vivacity between Joe and Mag as they study for their final examinations at grammar school and anticipate their wedding and the birth of their first baby (*Friel* 61). The atmosphere between the two young lovers and their playful and emotional discussions reveal their genuine love for one another, but their communication also exposes the tensions and uncertainties that have arisen as a result of their personality clash as well as Mag's unexpected teenage pregnancy. As their interests appear to differ considerably, their conversations tend to be monologic: as soon as one of the two characters starts to chit-chat, the other one's responses turn rather monosyllabic as the character is seen to be deeply immersed in his or her study books. Conse-

quently, the audience witnesses a day between these two teenagers that is full of imagination, joy, dreams, sorrows, anxieties and arguments.

To antedate the fatal outcome of the teenagers' study session this day, the commentators' reports function as instances of prolepsis.[20] Kosok rightly highlights that "the accidental death of Joe and Mag [...] has been deliberately eliminated" because the relevant "information is provided *before* Joe and Mag enter; consequently their presence on stage does not lead up to their deaths" (161, original emphasis). As a result of choosing this technique of presentation, the narrative aspect in "Winners" is accentuated at the cost of action or suspense. To the audience, who has access to both the commentators' public and the characters' private truths, the reality of the report is strangely altered. Comparing the actual situation to the tone of the linguistic reproduction by the commentators, the audience painfully experiences what Foucault refers to as the power of discourse to create, or in this case distort, reality when he claims that speech can itself be the site as well as the "object" of "man's conflicts" ("Discourse" 216). The public report, a reconstruction of the youngsters' last hours before their deaths, utterly fails to capture the atmosphere of the day for it presents a reality based on pure facts. Moreover, the impersonal, factual language used in the report by no means does justice to the personality of the young people.

The use of prolepses and the presentation of conflicting public and private truths are elements which are further developed in *The Freedom of the City*, where three young people participate in a peaceful protest march for justice and equal rights. As the situation escalates, these people manage to escape the police by locking themselves into the mayor's parlour in the Guildhall, one of the most meaningful symbols of British power in town. As in "Winners," the staging of the actual events inside the mayor's parlour alternates with the official reconstruction of the same situations by different characters, such as a member of the police or the media. According to the stage directions in the opening scene, "*[t]he stage is in darkness except for the apron which is lit in cold blue. Three bodies lie grotesquely across the front of the stage*" (*Freedom* 107). Throughout the play, a judge attempts to elucidate and comprehend what exactly happened

[20] Grant rightly points out that in various plays "Friel exploits the dramatist's power to deconstruct chronology" (20). From a chronological point of view, the main characters' experiences in Friel's plays could be regarded as analepses. However, as the focal point of Friel's plays is on the juxtaposition of the main protagonists' realities with other characters' powerful reconstruction of the same events, much more emphasis is on the aspect of linguistic power to distort reality than on suspense and the chronological unravelling of the actual events. Consequently, I have decided to regard the main protagonists' experiences in "Winners" (*Lovers*) as well as in *The Freedom of the City* as the main storylines. I will thus interpret those interceptive scenes in which other characters – in a postmodern manner – comment on what happened at a later stage in time as instances of prolepses.

and why the army shot these three young people as they were leaving the Guildhall. The judge's insight will remain limited, whereas the audience once more has access to both public and private truths. It sees what happens inside the Guildhall and follows the subsequent hearing in court. Moreover, the audience can witness how – apart from this judge – a priest, a journalist, a balladeer and a sociologist also each draw their own conclusions about the situation and how they invent the truth that best suits their interests. Again, as in "Winners," none of these interpretations has anything in common with the actual experience of the victims: "Neither the courts, the church, nationalist mythology, nor the mass media can find language that adequately recounts the trio's experience or its significance" (O'Brien, *Friel* 81). Nonetheless, each interpretation is a manifestation of linguistic power to produce (a false) reality. Emmert rightly points out that, in *The Freedom of the City*, "the contrast between power and powerlessness […] will be shown to be based on a juxtaposition of reality and fiction" (156, my translation).[21] Public knowledge or truth produced by those in power in the play is primarily subject to prejudice and generalisations, while the actual, true experience of the powerless, young people remains entirely hidden. Neither the representatives of the court, the church nor the university appear to care what really happened; the incident simply confirms their beliefs. Thus, those in power of the dominant discourse produce a truth – or, more concisely, a lie – that "has the purpose of preserving its own interests" (Deane, "Introduction" 18). Although the judge tries to choose his words carefully, he openly refers to the three people as "terrorists" (*Freedom* 134). Moreover, objectivity is shown to be beyond his reach when he states that "our only concern is with that period of time when these three people *came together*, *seized possession* of a civic building, and *openly defied* the security forces" (109, my emphasis). It is as if the victims had been found guilty before the hearing started: the judge's expressions imply that the three people belonged and co-operated together, followed a plan ("seized possession") and intended to provoke the army. In the end, the judge adopts a strong British point of view and concludes that:

> [t]here would have been no deaths in *London*derry on February 10 had the ban on the march and the meeting been respected, and had the speakers on the platform not *incited the mob* to such a fever that a clash between the security forces and the demonstrators was almost inevitable. […] There is *no reason* to suppose that the soldiers would have opened fire *if* they had not been fired on first. […] I must accept the evidence […] that two of them at least […] used their arms. (168, my emphasis)

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[21] Original: […] wird sich zeigen, dass die Kontrastierung von Macht und Ohnmacht […] auf einer Gegenüberstellung von Realität und Fiktion basiert (156).

In spite of this official summary by the judge, the audience is aware that none of the three characters was armed when, according to the stage directions, they left with "*their hands above their heads*" (167). Moreover, at this point, the audience has already listened to the three characters describe what happened at the moment they left the Guildhall. Because Elizabeth (Lily) Doherty, Michael Hegarty and Adrian Casimir Fitzgerald (Skinner) voice their individual points of view, Friel, once more, allows three protagonists to "speak beyond the grave" at the beginning of Act Two (Grant 20). Michael, the first one granted the power to recall the moment of his own death, expresses his disbelief over what happened as he reveals his serious misjudgement of the situation: "[T]here was no question of their shooting. I knew they weren't going to shoot. Shooting belonged to a totally different order of things" (*Freedom* 149). The moment he "heard the click of their rifle-bolts," he was convinced that "a terrible mistake had been made" (149). Summarising his emotions, he concludes: "And this is how I died – in disbelief, in astonishment, in shock. It was a foolish way for a man to die" (150). Michael's narrative is then contrasted with Lily's and Skinner's less naive accounts of the same experience; Lily immediately sensed that they would be killed when they "stepped outside the front door," while Skinner tells the audience that, as soon as he realised that they had escaped to the mayor's parlour for shelter and protection, he became aware of the final outcome and left the Guildhall fully prepared for what was going to happen (150). Unlike Lily, who claims to have "died of grief" and felt "overwhelmed by a tidal wave of regret [...] that life had somehow eluded [her]," Skinner does not lament his demise (150). He explains that he had decided to die as he had lived: "in defensive flippancy" (150). Individualising the last few seconds before their deaths, the voices of the powerless victims assume "greater authority than all the posturing of the various external witnesses" (Grant 20). Juxtaposing the characters' private experiences with the public interpretations, therefore, produces great tension and lays open the mechanisms of power used by those who are given the right to verbally express or produce reality (Foucault, "Truth and Power" 131). Although the feelings evoked by the three victims' accounts differ substantially, the audience's sympathy, as in all of Friel's plays, belongs to those whose private truth is repressed or silenced by powerful public opinion.

A slight variation of the technique observed in *The Freedom of the City* is presented in *Faith Healer* and *Molly Sweeney*, where the audience always tends to empathise with the character currently delivering his private view of the past events. Whereas Friel introduced an extra character to express the private self of Public Gar in *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* the ordinary, public view of characters is abandoned altogether in *Faith Healer* and *Molly Sweeney*; the plays concentrate exclusively on the characters' private sphere. The two plays

radically break with traditional communicative patterns; any direct dialogue between the characters has been abolished, symbolising, on the level of the plot, what FitzGibbon aptly describes as "the inescapability of existential isolation" (79) or what Emmert refers to as "the theme of malfunctioning communication as well as the inaccessibility and alienation of the individual" (81, my translation).[22] In this sense, *Faith Healer* and *Molly Sweeney* are, according to DeVinney, two plays which completely "replac[e] action with narration" (111). Instead of conversing amongst each other, the characters speak only to themselves or address the audience. Thus, DeVinney further indicates that the "meaning [of the events] resides not in what actually happens but in how they are narrated by and to the people who participated in them" (111).Therefore, whenever a character's utterance or monologue is overheard by the audience or whenever a character actually attempts to turn the audience into his or her ally or into an "anchor to the logic of her own psychological narrative," as the main protagonist does in *The Loves of Cass McGuire*, the listener is invariably turned into an insider who has to assess the information given by comparing it to those characters who are less communicative or have not verbally expressed a particular issue (Higgins 16).

Both plays centre round the life of a married couple, complemented by a manager in *Faith Healer* and an ophthalmologist in *Molly Sweeney*. In both cases, one major event is talked about, namely the failed homecoming of the artist Frank Hardy in *Faith Healer*, which culminates in his being murdered in Ballybeg, and the eye operation in *Molly Sweeney*, which deprives the protagonist of her independent and confident life and ends with her withdrawing to her own space where "fact – fiction – fantasy – reality" seem to mingle (*Molly* 67). As the characters grant each other access neither to their private space nor to their thoughts or feelings, their "emotional and, indeed experiential" isolation becomes, on the dramaturgical level, "the core of his [i. e. Friel's] theatrical form" (DeVinney 112 and 116). Instead, the silence or the complete lack of communication between the characters is replaced by the private contemplation of their own memories which are presented in monologic form.[23] The characters' memories, as they are expressed on stage, are enacted as

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22 Original: […] die Thematik der gestörten Kommunikation und der Isolation und Entfremdung des Individuums […] (81).

23 In an extra note to his stage directions in *Faith Healer*, Friel refers to the characters as "monologist[s]" (331). According to Nichols, the term 'monologue' is "not […] restricted to a specific genre but rather a point of view," although there are "clear connections to drama" (799). Moreover, a 'monologue' is typically related to "the idea of a person speaking alone, with or without an audience," thereby stressing "the subjective and personal element in speech" (798 and 799). Like most critics, I have decided to follow Friel's example and refer to the speeches of his characters by using the umbrella term 'monologue,' despite the fact that any character's utterances could also be described as a 'soliloquy,' a "form of monologue in

"reconstructions [...] whose inaccuracy with regard to the historical actuality is caused by subjectivity and the axiomatic unreliability of human recollection" (Brunkhorst 228–229, my translation).[24] In other words, objective truth is sacrificed at the expense of unlimited subjectivity and individual versions of truth. This fictionalising of truth, however, at times unveils a – in the Greek sense of the word – tragic *conditio humana*: although the characters do not intend to misinterpret or equivocate situations by publishing their private and, at times, even repressed version of truth, due to their cultural prejudice or their limited insight, they cannot always prevent this from happening.

Listening to the characters' private sorrows or worries as well as to their interpretations of the other characters and their actions, the audience is more informed than each individual character. Based on what has already been said, the audience witnesses how these three characters misunderstand and misinterpret each other since they appear to be unable to communicate or share privateness with one another. Although their accounts are characterised by perfect honesty, their realities or perceptions do not always match. Indeed, their perspectives produce a certain degree of dissonance. Moreover, the fact that the audience is better informed than the characters on stage leads to an extreme case of discrepant awareness; completely unaware of what the other characters have told the audience, the attempt to clarify one's own standpoint is intensified. Enforcing their point of view, the characters often speculate on motivations or ideas of the others, thereby illustrating that "people behave according to the way they perceive the world, not simply on the basis of the way the world is. Knowing how the decision-makers see the world [...] will help to explain and predict their behaviour" (Sack 95). Typically, the statements about another character primarily reveal something about the speaker's own personality. When Mr Rice in *Molly Sweeney*, for instance, ridicules Frank Sweeney, he calls him "Mr Autodidact" and describes him as "an ebullient fellow; full of energy and enquiry and the indiscriminate enthusiasms of the self-taught. And convinced, as they usually are, that his own life was of compelling interest" (25 and 16). Decrying Frank, the ophthalmologist cannot avoid coming across as rather snobbish and disagreeable himself. Frank, on the other hand, also admits that he "really never did warm" to Mr Rice, and he mischievously adds: "No wonder his wife cleared off with another man" (20). Although Frank regrets this statement as soon as it

which an actor speaks alone on stage" representing "a character's attempt to verbalize his thoughts, consciously or distractedly [...]" (799).

[24] Original: [...] Rekonstruktionen [...], deren Ungenauigkeit gegenüber der historischen Tatsächlichkeit durch die Subjektivität und grundsätzliche Unzuverlässigkeit menschlicher Rückbesinnung bedingt ist (228–229).

has been uttered and he immediately tries to make up for it by adding "[n]o, no, no, I don't mean that; I really don't mean that; that's a rotten thing to say; sorry; I shouldn't have said that," the damage of presenting himself as well as Mr Rice in an unfavourable light is irreparable (20). Therefore, although there is no mediator in these two pieces of drama, the aspect of power is by no means abandoned. The different voices are engaged in "power struggles over reality," and in these two plays in which "[n]arration is the action; the conflict is between words and the people who believe in them" (DeVinney 111 and 115).

In these linguistic battles, the order in which the speakers address the audience becomes particularly meaningful; the first and last thoughts that are expressed have a tremendous impact. Not surprisingly, in both plays, the first and the last speeches belong to the main protagonist. In their first speeches, Molly Sweeney and Frank Hardy set the atmosphere, and as their ideas are consistent in themselves, they are taken for granted. Incongruities between the different accounts, such as whether Grace and Frank Hardy, the couple in *Faith Healer*, were married and what family members' deaths are for ever associated with Kinlochbervie, gradually arise with the different characters' statements which undermine or negate what was taken for fact up to a certain point in the play. As the audience listens to Molly Sweeney's childhood memories, it comes as a certain surprise that both Mr Rice and her husband Frank express their view that Molly had nothing to lose by undergoing eye surgery. Consequently, despite each character's perfect honesty, intimacy or secrecy between the characters and the audience are repeatedly shattered when what was said before is weakened by another character's description of the same event which he or she experienced or interpreted quite differently. Whenever the audience is made aware of multiple points of view because some new information is revealed, the various accounts have to be carefully assessed in order to create a coherent picture of what most likely happened. Furthermore, after every monologue, the audience is asked to reassess their judgement of the different characters on stage. Hence, a sense of definite truth cannot be constructed easily; once more, the aspect of absolute truth remains a difficult concept in this respect. In the end, a vague feeling of sympathy and confidentiality is steered towards the main protagonists because their last thoughts are no longer contradicted; however, due to the experience of constantly being presented with different views and interpretations, the audience's sense of empathy remains subject to doubt.

Apart from the order in which the characters express their thoughts, another reason that influences what the audience thinks of the individual characters in these two plays can be found in the type of monologue that they deliver. In his study of *Shakespeare and the History of Soliloquy*, Hirsh distinguishes between "[a]udience-addressed speech," "[s]elf-addressed speech" and

the "[i]nterior monologue" (13). Claiming that these three forms "have radically different functions and effects," he defines an audience-addressed speech as an utterance made by "[a] character who addresses an audience of hundreds or perhaps thousands of people" and thus "engages in an extremely *public* form of behaviour" (13 and 14, original emphasis). If a character "addresses only himself," he or she "engages in one of the most *private* forms of outward behaviour," while each of these forms, in turn, "fundamentally differs from an interior monologue, which represents purely *internal* experience rather than outward behavior" (14, original emphasis). Adapting Hirsh's distinction to Friel's use of monologues helps to differentiate the degree of publicness or privateness expressed in the various characters' speeches. While none of the speeches in Friel's plays can actually be described as an interior monologue, it is the monologues by the two female figures, Molly Sweeney and Grace Hardy in particular, which remind the audience of Joyce's last chapter in *Ulysses*. Not only does Molly Bloom lend her first name to one of these characters, her unspoken fantasies, worries and thoughts closely resemble the mostly self-contained reflections of the two female figures in *Faith Healer* and *Molly Sweeney*.

Grace Hardy, for instance, never explicitly acknowledges the audience. Throughout her monologue and consistent with her frame of mind, she appears to be engaged in a discussion with herself when, according to the stage directions, "*[w]e discover [her] on stage [. . .]. She is in early middle-age. Indifferent to her appearance and barely concealing her distraught mental state*" (*Faith* 341). In fact, she starts her monologue in the same way as her husband: by "reciting the names of all those dying Welsh villages" in which he performed what he calls his art of "faith healing. A craft without an apprenticeship, a ministry without responsibility, a vocation without a ministry" (343 and 333):

GRACE. (*Eyes closed)*
Aberarder, Aberayron,
Llangranog, Llangurig,
Abergorlech, Abergynolwyn,
Penllech, Pencader,
Llandefeilog, Llanerchymedd . . . (341)

While Frank argues that he kept repeating those names to himself "just for the mesmerism, the sedation" and intended to release the tension he felt before a performance, this mantra has remained the "most persistent and most agonizing" of all of Grace's memories (332 and 341). As her husband's constant reiteration of those words regularly resulted in blotting her out of his life, Grace believes he recited those names in order to exercise his power of hurting her:

> GRACE. And then, for him, I didn't exist. Many, many, many times I didn't exist for him. But before a performance this exclusion – no, it wasn't an exclusion, it was an erasion – this erasion was absolute; he obliterated me. Me who tended him, humoured him, nursed him, sustained him – who debauched myself for him. Yes. That's the most persistent memory. Yes. And when I remember him like that in the back of the van, God how I hate him again –
>
> Kinlochbervie, Inverbervie,
> Inverdruie, Invergordon,
> Badachroo, Kinlochewe,
> Ballantrae, Inverkeithing,
> Cawdor, Kirkconnel,
> Plaidy, Kirkinner…
>
> (*Quietly, almost dreamily*) Kinlochbervie's where the baby's buried, two miles south of the village, in a field on the left-hand side of the road as you go north. (344)

At the time of her speech, Grace is traumatised by Frank's death in Ballybeg and the stillbirth she suffered in the tiny village of Kinlochbervie. Although she is said to, physically, be "living in digs" in London now, her monologue reveals that, from a mental standpoint, she inhabits a very private world of her own as her former plights have left her totally paralysed (369). Although Grace refers to Frank's listing of those Welsh names as her "most persistent and most agonizing" memory, in her monologue she tends to lapse into reciting and mesmerising those places whenever she is completely overwhelmed by her highly emotional memories, just as her husband used to do before his performances. Contrary to the pain and desperation experienced by Frank's death and her stillbirth, Grace seems familiar with the feelings evoked by the sound of those Welsh names; they are a well-known territory for her and easier to cope with than the deaths of her beloved ones. Moreover, trying to convince herself that she is "getting stronger" and "becoming more controlled," she is determined to recapture those "restricted memories" (341 and 342). Teddy's monologue, which directly follows Grace's account, however, shatters this positive outlook on her future; in fact, he informs the audience that he had "to identify" Grace Hardy when she died "from an overdose of sleeping-tablets" (369).

The atmosphere in Molly Sweeney's monologues does not differ greatly from the one established by Grace Hardy; after all, Molly Sweeney has also "moved away" from her husband and her friends and has withdrawn into a "borderline country" where she, in her own words, feels "at home," or at least, "… at ease" (*Molly* 59 and 67). Nevertheless, contrary to Grace's speech, there are short instances in Molly's monologues where she addresses the audience directly despite the rather private behaviour during her entire disclosures. By doing so, she acknowledges that she is aware of their presence and that she is

not just talking to herself trying to come to terms with her current situation. Twice she repeats the phrase: "I can't tell you [i. e. the audience] the joy I got from swimming" (24). Recalling the night before the operation, she remembers how Frank Sweeney stopped her from inviting Mr Rice to their party. Agreeing with Frank, she resumes: "Imagine the embarrassment that would have been" (30). These instances in which Molly vaguely acknowledges the audience in her speech and in which she indirectly displays a need to make her private truth public, however, have very little in common with the male voices whose monologues are far from accidentally overheard by the audience.

The men's speeches could be defined as true linguistic performances. Their interactions with the audience show that on the theatrical level "performance is [...] understood as the narration/description of events, rather than the acting out of them" (DeVinney 117). Frank Sweeney's language, representative of the male protagonists in this context, is not only characterised by his chatty tone and an excessive usage of adjectives expressing emotions. In his monologues, he also tries to establish a particularly strong bond with the audience by asking it questions or answering its imagined ones:

> One of the most *fascinating* discoveries I made when I was in the cheese business – well, perhaps not fascinating, but interesting, definitely interesting – one of the more interesting discoveries I made – this was long before I met Molly – for three and a half years I had a small goat farm on the island of Inis Beag off the Mayo coast – *no*, *no*, not a farm for small goats – a farm for ordinary goats – *well*, extraordinary goats as a matter of fact because I imported two piebald Iranian goats – and *I can't tell you* how complicated and expensive that whole process was [...] – they couldn't endure the Mayo winters with the result that I had to keep them indoors and feed them for six months of the year – in Mayo the winter lasts for six months *for God's sake* – at least it did on Inis Beag. And of course that threw my whole financial planning into disarray. *As you can imagine*. [...] But *I was telling you about – what*? The *interesting* discovery! *Yes*! *Well*, perhaps not an *interesting* discovery in any general sense but certainly of *great interest* to anybody who hopes to make cheese from the milk of imported Iranian goats [...]. *So what*, *you may ask*. (*Molly* 18–19, my emphasis)

Engaging in a conversation with the audience reveals Frank's emotional need to overcome the prevailing atmosphere of the above-mentioned "existential isolation" among the characters on stage (FitzGibbon 79). At the same time, Frank Sweeney stages himself as an easily excitable, energetic, passionate fellow who is always fiercely committed to a current project at its outset as Mr Rice indeed indicates when he describes him in his first monologue. Frank considers himself exceptionally experienced as a result of having read numerous theories and magazine articles as well as having executed a number of outlandish schemes such as keeping Iranian goats on Inis Beag or enduring "three winters in Norway to ensure the well-being of whales" (*Molly* 16). In

O'Brien's eyes, "Frank is a self-appointed provider of alternative brave new worlds" as his "nature is that of the man with the plan. His past projects reveal erratic enthusiasms, and have the contradictory consistency of causing dislocation by attempting to do good" ("The Late Plays" 94). Having engaged in and later abandoned, what Roche calls, a variety of "get-rich-quick schemes, most of which are as implausible as they are unlikely to succeed" (*Theatre* 194), Frank is completely unable to channel his energy and abilities. In fact, he is fully aware of his failure according to public standards: "Middle-aged. No skill. No job. No prospect of a job. Two rooms above Kelly's cake-shop. And not exactly Rudolf Valentino" (*Molly* 36). Presenting himself as a man of action to the audience, however, allows Frank Sweeney to cope with his inferiority complex. In fact, he seems to hope that by being associated with these strange and unusual projects his life, of which "Molly is his grandest scheme to date" (Roche, *Theatre* 194), he himself will gain meaning and his environment will regard him as "interesting" or "fascinating" (*Molly* 18). His linguistic performance on stage, therefore, takes on an identity-building function, as it symbolises his longing for attention and recognition, both of which he feels have been denied to him so far. Form and content – dramaturgical device and plot – merge again.

In Friel's play *Give Me Your Answer, Do!* the exposition and the end of the play are set in a sanatorium, where the main protagonist Tom Connolly visits his daughter Bridget, who is afflicted with some "nervous trouble" (40). According to Roche, "[t]he two scenes between father and daughter that frame the play" closely resemble the dramaturgical setup in *Faith Healer* and *Molly Sweeney* and "also provide the most powerful sub-text to everything that occurs in between" (*Theatre* 200). "[F]lailing about and roaring like a stuck bull," the young woman actually had to be moved to the dark and soundproof basement one hour before her father's arrival (*Give* 15). When Tom first enters, he therefore "*gazes at his daughter for a long time, his face without expression*" (11). Meanwhile, Bridget is said to be sitting on

> *an iron bed with an uncovered mattress; no sheets, blankets, pillows. […] Her arms are wrapped around her knees. She is wearing an institutional nightdress and dressing-gown. Her mouth is open and her eyes are wide and she stares vacantly in front of her. Slowly and ceaselessly she rocks herself backwards and forwards.* (11)

Having studied her for a while, Tom composes himself and addresses Bridget "*with almost excessive enthusiasm*" (11):

> TOM. Well! Who is this elegant young woman? What entrancing creature is this 'with forehead of ivory and amethyst eyes and cold, immortal hands'? It's not Miss Bridget Connelly, is it? It most certainly is my Bridget

> Connelly, beautiful and mysterious as ever. And what's this? Her auburn hair swept back over her *left* ear? Now, that's new! And just a little bit saucy! And very, very, becoming! The new night-nurse did it? Well, the new night-nurse has style! We'll make her your official hairdresser from now on. How are you, my darling? Give your father a big kiss. (11, original emphasis)

Although Tom tries to have an intimate conversation with Bridget once "[n]obody can hear a word [they] say," his speech is, in reality, a monologue in which he discloses private knowledge and shares some secrets with her (12). As Bridget never responds to his speech, Tom is forced to envisage her comments and answer the questions she might ask if she were able to. By giving Bridget an update of what is going on at home, Tom – indirectly – also informs the audience who finds itself in the same position as Bridget; rather than being present when the actions take place, they all depend on Tom's narrative. Thus, excluded from the crucial moments and decisions in Tom's life, Bridget and the audience are at a disadvantage without his explanations. To be involved and to be able to understand what is happening, he needs to inform both parties.

Since Tom's relation to Bridget is characterised by confidentiality and love, the members of the audience, who overhear the way he addresses his daughter, are indirectly treated as if they belonged to the family; in this dark and cool room where, as Roche highlights, "the writer can go to create" and "secrets can be disclosed," I would argue that intimate and private knowledge is, indeed, readily shared (*Theatre* 200). Apart from beholding Bridget's situation, the audience is introduced to "totally transformed" and slightly odd grandparents who have appeared "out of the blue" and are planning on staying with Bridget's parents over night (*Give* 13 and 12). However, the fantastical elements which Tom weaves into the descriptions of Bridget's grandparents so that they resemble "an elaborate children's story" slightly undermine his position as a reliable narrator (Roche, *Theatre* 200). Tom's news about Bridget's talented mother, who is occasionally "off in some private world of her own," as well as his serious difficulties in writing and selling his novels prove much more trustworthy and realistic (*Give* 13). Thus, long before any dialogue between Tom and his wife, Bridget's grandparents or Tom's friends occurs, an atmosphere of privateness and a strong sense of intimacy have been established in the play.

Throughout his speech, Tom's pain at having no access to the world of his daughter and his uncertainty whether he, a professional writer, is succeeding in reaching her with his narratives are revealed by his words. O'Brien rightly concludes that "[i]t's not alone his work or his archive that he [i.e. Tom]'s faithful to, it is also Bridget, who in her inability to respond to his imagination calls its value into question" ("The Late Plays" 97). In this context, Bridget

might well be one reason for Tom's struggle to finish the book he has been writing for five years.

At the very end of the play, Tom returns to Bridget on his "weekly duty" (*Give* 29). In fact, he is the only character in this play who regularly summons the courage to face up to his daughter's deplorable situation and to bravely confront the "silent realm beyond language (and logic) and so beyond description" which Bridget represents and in which "[t]he unsayable is not said but [...] is nevertheless manifest" (Friel, "Extracts" 167).[25] Apart from mentioning that her auburn hair is "swept back over her *right* ear" this time, Tom uses the exact same words to open the conversation with Bridget as when he first visited her in Act One (*Give* 82, original emphasis). He then proceeds to tell her – and the audience – how the financial and personal problems, which the play centred round and which had partly arisen because of Bridget's severe illness, have meanwhile been solved (81–84). Using the same phrases as before could be seen to symbolise that even a professional writer is at a loss for words when he has to come to terms with his daughter's serious mental condition (22). However, from a more positive standpoint, it could also be argued that Tom has actually managed to turn these meetings with his daughter into a ritual, thereby seeking some familiarity and intimacy in spite of her aloofness and her being in a state "beyond knowing" (79).

Still, as both the audience and Bridget occupy recipient positions in *Give Me Your Answer, Do!* the situation in which they find themselves is ambivalent. Since Tom is emotionally drawn towards his daughter, there is, on the one hand, a sense of involvement. On the other hand, there is also a sense of exclusion because the audience and Bridget are not present when important decisions are taken. Consequently, both parties need to be informed afterwards and therefore entirely depend on Tom's point of view. However, depending on one view exclusively – due to the dramaturgical constellation in a play – has frequently been shown to serve as a source of uneasiness in this chapter as it tends to provide the audience with more doubts and questions than with definite answers.

Thus, having discussed different dramaturgical techniques which Friel experiments with in his oeuvre, I would, in conclusion, claim that all of those approaches serve to illustrate the playwright's great discomfort with absolute

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[25] In their essay "'Singing of Human Unsuccess': Brian Friel's Portraits of the Artist" Bertha and Morse paint a most loving picture of Tom as a father and artist indicating that Bridget "is the most difficult because the most unresponsive of any of Tom's 'readers'" (28). Nevertheless, I agree with their statement that Tom, by taking on this special challenge and by "persistently trying, against all odds, to awaken the human within his daughter, becomes one of Friel's most arresting images of the true artist who must employ his talent even when he knows there is no rational possibility of change – that the situation is truly hopeless" (28).

concepts, such as *truth* and *reality*. Publicising the views of the individual characters in his plays repeatedly allows Friel to debunk the idea of an overruling, public point of view that coincides with the personal point of view of the individual characters as an illusion. Moreover, illustrating in his plays *how* the dominant public view regularly undermines and falsifies the private truth and reality of his characters, Friel, at various stages in his oeuvre, manages to evoke a feeling of unease in the audience who is made aware of alternative perspectives by other characters whose viewpoints are withheld in order to produce suspense and to stress the significance of uncertainty and of the private truth over the absolute.

2. The Power of Public Pressure or Opinion

My reading of Anglo-Irish texts in which space and the representation of the Irish population play a pivotal role repeatedly reveals a strong tendency to willingly shift the borderline between the public and the private sphere. The repression or denial of private knowledge by those in power has frequently been shown to have caused Anglo-Irish writers to explore and disclose their characters' private realm in order to oppose dominant (colonial) discourse and to unveil the hidden or silenced. Comparing these findings to Habermas' diagram in which he distinguishes the sphere of public authority from the two different shades of the private realm in the eighteenth century, one finds a gradual movement towards publicising the most private or even intimate.[26] At first, the Anglo-Irish writers disclosed knowledge about the inner circle of their community and their family. Then, parallel to the growing interest in psychology, their inner lives became the focal point of their studies. Finally, in James Joyce's novel *Ulysses*, no taboos remain; whatever matters to the characters in Joyce's text is made public at least on a textual level. The same is true for Friel's plays. Epitomising the tensions between the public and the private domain in his writing, Friel invariably lays open his characters' private or intimate realm. Not only does this act of unveiling the private sphere allow the audience to study the characters' concepts of *home* and *family*, but it also draws attention to their sorrows or individual points of view. As Pine highlights, *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* is, therefore, by no means Friel's only play in which a character's private world and thoughts are uncovered:

> [I]n each of his [i. e. Friel's] characters who portrays the inner man in conflict with the public world, Columba (in *The Enemy Within)*, Gar ([. . .] in *Philadelphia, Here I Come!*), Fox Melarkey (in *Crystal and Fox*), Frank Hardy (in *Faith Healer*), Hugh O'Donnell (in

[26] Habermas' diagram was discussed in Chapter II (p. 15).

> *Translations*) and Hugh O'Neill (in *Making History*), we see a man trying to make himself whole and to complete his vision of the world by satisfying the world's demands. (*Ireland's Drama* 17)

As indicated in the previous chapter, including both the public and the private sphere in a play, on the one hand, makes it possible to offer more than one version of truth; on the other hand, it also allows the dramatist to filter "the world's demands" and to reveal to what extent the public realm (such as the power of public authority or public opinion) regulates a character's private domain by means of pressure.

Defining power as those aspects which are "concerned with the bringing about of consequences," Philip holds that social sciences distinguish between "different bases of power (for example, wealth, status, knowledge, charisma, force and authority); different forms of power (such as influence, coercion and control); and different uses of power (such as individual or community ends, political ends and economic ends)" (657). Indicating that "[d]efinitional problems seem to be endemic" when discussing power issues, Philip claims that, according to one basic view of power, a character can exercise power over another "when A affects B in a manner contrary to B's preferences, interest, needs and so on" regardless of the fact whether the effects are deliberate or foreseeable (658). As "the focus is on A's power *over* B," this approach tends to "[identify] the victims of power" and is therefore particularly fruitful in a postcolonial context such as Friel's (659, original emphasis). The following subchapter on manifestations of power will centre round why and how characters in Friel's plays try to gain control over others and how they exercise their power. In this section, however, those figures will be examined who feel that control and authority is used at their expense and who particularly suffer from public opinion. Public pressure, or the use of negative influence, will thus be understood in this part of my study as power used, with or without intention, against someone else's will.

The Enemy Within explores the different forms of pressure and constraints Columba, the founder of the monastery of Iona, is subjected to before he finally appears to free himself from outer secular influences or temptations and from his personal longings which are – at times – diametrically opposed to the rules of the monastery. In the preface to the play, Friel insisted that the play "is neither a history nor a biography but an imaginative account" in which he has "concentrated instead on the private man" (7). The play is typical for Friel's oeuvre insofar as the playwright shifted the main conflict to his protagonist's inner life (Niel, "Brian Friel" 39). For most of the play, a strong tension exists between his former life in an Irish community and the religious world he has chosen for himself. Moreover, as abbot and founder of several monasteries,

Columba is trapped by his public duties and his private desires. Murray is right when he emphasises that

> Columba is community-minded; his struggle is to give up politics, so to speak, for the family. He needs to learn how to stay at home and build a strong spiritual base: except that, paradoxically, 'home' here means 'exile'. He must learn, then, to make of exile a home. (Introduction xiii)

Successfully decoding what Iona used to symbolise for him so that it comes to represent his new home, Columba, first of all, needs to accept the monks as his new community and family. Secondly, it means that he has to learn how to submit his personal wishes to those of the Catholic Church.

Columba's dilemma to uphold a clear distinction between his former private and his current religious lives is first foreshadowed when he returns from "giving [the young monks] a hand with the corn" and begins to study the verse which Caornan, his closest friend and the most talented scribe in Iona, has copied that day (*Enemy* 11):

> 'Do not think that I come to send peace upon earth; I come not to send peace but the sword. For I come to set a man at variance against his father and the daughter against her mother and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's enemies shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father and mother more than Me is not worthy of Me –.' (19–20)

Struck by this passage from the Gospel according to Matthew, which so aptly summarises his personal situation, Columba confesses that Iona has always remained a place of exile for him and he then goes on to beg Caornan to pray for his salvation.[27] Columba has, in fact, never abandoned his loyalty to Ireland and to his family (O'Brien, *Friel* 44). Regardless of his fame and in spite of being publicly revered "[a]s a builder of churches [...] a builder of schools [...] an organiser," Columba admits that "the inner man – the soul – [is] chained

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[27] In the Gospel according to Matthew (10:34–37), Jesus tells his disciples that his arrival has brought disagreement and division to families rather than peace because different members of a family often disagree on their interpretation of his teachings. Then he suggests that, although the younger generation in a family should be loyal to the elder, a Christian's first loyalty should be to God, not to his family. In *The Enemy Within* Columba's family fail to respect the monk's decision to serve God whenever they beg him to back them up or fight in their private feuds or battles. Moreover, Columba himself knows that, according to this passage in the Scriptures, he is unworthy of God because he keeps answering his family's frequent calls and, therefore, regularly proves that for him the family is more important than his faith. Although Columba has earned other people's admiration for founding monasteries and for his religious deeds, he, personally, despises himself because he does not succeed in overcoming his deep love for his family and Ireland to finally serve the Lord and abandon his old loyalties.

irrevocably to the earth, to the green wooded earth of Ireland" (*Enemy* 21). However, knowing that his love and longing for Ireland are stronger than his Christian belief ails Columba. Revealing this secret piece of truth underlines how unworthy he feels of God and of other people's admiration.

Having acknowledged that he is strongly divided between the two forces – family and faith – in his life, it is not surprising that Columba readily breaks his own vow and the rules of the monastery whenever his relatives plead to him to represent and lead them in a private feud. The audience witnesses how Columba even gives in to their requests in situations in which he later concludes that the dispute was, in fact, little more than "a shabby squabble between neighbours" (50). His relations, however, know that whenever he joins them in their fights, the status, charisma and religious authority he exudes – comparable to Habermas' notion of rulers in the Middle Ages and the representative power of their insignia – considerably strengthens their position in public.[28] Therefore, they repeatedly urge the famous abbot to disregard his doubts for the good of his people.

In the example depicted in the play, Grillaan, second monk in Iona, reminds Columba – as he has apparently done many times before – of his private and public duties in Iona; he even accuses him of giving in to public pressure and reproaches him for behaving as if he were "a rallying cry" (32) or "a private chaplain" to his family rather than "a priest in voluntary exile for God" (34). Columba, however, falls back into his former life calling out to his relatives: "Royal blood that answers to the call of its people! [...] Get into your travelling clothes! We are going *home*! Now!" (33-34, my emphasis) Reacting to public pressure from his own family because he still considers Ireland his true home, Columba (ab)uses the power which he has gained in the public realm as a representative of clerical authority to pursue his family's personal interests. When he finally returns, Columba – as always – regrets his decision and also expresses his remorse for having neglected his religious duties. This time, he learns that Caornan, who had asked for a private conversation with Columba before his departure, has died during his absence. Distressed that the last wish of his friend in the monastery was not fulfilled because he failed his duties as abbot of Iona, Columba asks for "the most severe penances" Grillaan "can think of" and is told to practise "moderation" and "to live the Rule of Iona to the letter" (48 and 49). However, literally within minutes of having solemnly vowed to do so, his public reputation causes him to fall victim to his private demands again. Oswald, the youngest novice in Iona, confronts Columba with his public reputation by adoring him as "a saint" and a "man of heroic virtue"

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[28] A more detailed description of the 'representative' public sphere and its function in the Middle Ages occurs in Chapter II (p. 13–14).

(54). Although Columba rejects Oswald's characterisation, the novice expresses his conviction that Columba is simply too modest to acknowledge the truth. Oswald never questions public opinion and accepts it as reality. Finally, Columba loses his temper over Oswald's persistence and "*slaps him across the face with his open hand*" (54). Completely taken aback by the course of action, the young man flees. While Columba, driven by his personal impulse, desperately seeks the young man in order to apologise for his behaviour and to assuage his conscience, he again neglects his public duties in Iona. Once more, Grillaan has to represent the monastery, and the monks are obliged to lie in order to hide the truth about Columba's absence. Returning from his unsuccessful search in the final act of the play, Columba is met by his own brother and nephew who beseech him to assist them in a fight of the Picts. Recalling his vow not to fight for his family again and reminded of Caornan's death, Columba, for the first time, refuses to answer one of his clan's calls. When Columba finally succeeds in rejecting his family's public pressure, he breaks the vicious circle of being at his family's mercy. Although he dismisses and condemns the family who curse him as a "coward" and a "traitor" before leaving the island, Columba's love for Ireland is indefeasible (75). In fact, when he compares the struggle between his homeland and Iona to the fight between his body and soul, he suffers an emotional breakdown:

> Get out of my monastery! Get out of my island! Get out of my life! Go back to those damned mountains and seductive hills that have robbed me of my Christ! You soaked my sweat! You sucked my blood! You stole my manhood, my best years! What more do you demand of me, damned Ireland? My soul? My immortal soul? Damned, damned, damned Ireland! – (*His voice breaks*) Soft, green Ireland – beautiful, green Ireland – my lovely green Ireland. O my Ireland –. (75)

Columba's connection to Ireland has rightly been described as a *femme fatale* relationship (Pine, *Ireland's Drama* 77).[29] Although Columba's love for Ireland (as *femme fatale*) does not harm his own family and tribe, it is, however,

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[29] Defining the term *femme fatale*, Stott describes this type of woman as a "powerful and threatening figure" who is characterised by the effect which she prototypically has on the male protagonist: "a *femme* cannot be *fatale* without a male being present, even where her fatalism is directed towards herself" (viii, original emphasis). Dämmrich supports this view and points out that encountering this woman who is thought to possess both seductive and threatening features often turns out to be a stern test for the hero which he cannot resolve easily. The events brought about by meeting this female figure then illustrate how steadfast the male character is and allow the reader to draw conclusions with regard to the hero's frame of mind. After all, the enchanting effect which the woman has on the male figure often serves as a catalyst for him to abandon his "home, family and destiny of life" [Heim, Familie und Bestimmung im Leben] that is to enjoy unimagined pleasures with her (150, my translation).

incompatible with his duties as abbot of Iona and affects his substitute family, the monks. Nonetheless, I reject those interpretations that see the ending as yet another unsuccessful beginning in Columba's life (O'Brien, *Friel* 45, Pine, *Ireland's Drama* 86, Andrews, *Art* 84). Instead, I support Dantanus' reading that Columba's "exile has been completed, but at a high cost" (82). From a verbal point of view, the abbot has finally managed to free himself from public power and from the spell that his own family and country have had over him so far. Together with Oswald, who has returned to the monastery, and the mentally confused monk Dochonna, Columba is "ready to begin" the religious journey of saving his soul from his family's influence:

> COLUMBA. Welcome – welcome *home* – welcome *home*, Oswald.
> OSWALD. There was nothing to eat but barnacles and dulse –
> COLUMBA. Oh, Oswald! Oswald! Oswald! Oswald!
> DOCHONNA. You said he [i. e. Caornan; Dochonna mistakes Oswald for Caornan] was asleep, Columba, but I knew he wasn't. I knew he wasn't!
> COLUMBA. We *were* both *asleep*, Dochonna of Lough Conn! But we are *awake* now and *ready to begin again* – to begin again – to begin again! (*Enemy* 77, my emphasis)

In spite of repeating most phrases as if he wanted to convince himself of their meaning, Columba's use of the words "home" and "awake" implies that a new era has begun; Iona has taken the place of Ireland. Symbolically, the novice's and the abbot's homecoming fuse and Columba's nightmare of falling back into the same pattern is finally over. This crucial moment in Columba's life takes the form of a personal revelation. The protagonist feels that for a long time he was "asleep" and unable to balance the pressure between the public and the private realm; feeling obliged to his family, he willingly accepted that his family wanted him to represent them by (ab)using his authority or power in public. In the course of the play, Columba undergoes a personal development. After a long process, he succeeds in creating a new identity for himself. He reaches a stage where his usage of the collective personal pronoun "we" underlines his transformation in the play: he has achieved a unity with the other monks which compensates for the loss of his family. Moreover, he seems "ready" to subordinate his private concerns to the public interests of Iona.

Public pressure, as found in *The Enemy Within*, and the power of public opinion can considerably influence or shape a character's actions. While Corbett detects a general interest "in the gaps between word and deed" in Friel's writing (108), McGrath argues that "*The Freedom of the City* is the first play in which Friel displays an awareness of how discourse shapes the institutional realities that we inhabit" (119). After all, McGrath argues that in *The Freedom of the City*

> [t]he scenes within the Guildhall are framed by the public discourses outside. [. . .] In a sense the real protagonists of the play are the discourses of power that frame the activities of the hapless trio in the mayor's parlour, limit their possibilities, determine the course of their lives, appropriate the meaning of their existence, and collaborate to snuff out that existence to suit the purposes of the respective discourses. (103–104)

One of the powerful voices referred to by McGrath belongs to Liam O'Kelly, a television newsman for the Republic of Ireland. In his live coverage of the demonstration, he notifies the public of the latest developments. The journalist's statement sheds light on how powerful the role of the mass media in modern times can be. In fact, O'Kelly's speech worsens the situation between the police forces and people marching for their human rights. His summary of what he understands is currently happening is an excellent example of how reality is distorted and fiction produced by the media. Moreover, the journalist's report "also contributes to the dynamics of the tragedy by unwittingly confirming the official view" (McGrath 109):

> I am standing on the walls *overlooking* Guildhall Square in Derry where only a short time ago a civil rights meeting, estimated at about three thousand strong, was broken up by a large contingent of police and troops. There are no reports of serious casualties but *unconfirmed reports* are coming in that a group of *about fifty armed gunmen have taken possession of the Guildhall* here below me and have barricaded themselves in. *If the reports are accurate*, and if the Guildhall, regarded by the minority as a symbol of Unionist dominations, has fallen into the hands of the *terrorists*, both *the security forces and the Stormont government will be acutely embarrassed*. Brigadier Johnson-Hansbury who was in charge of today's elaborate security operation has, so far, *refused to confirm or deny the report. No comment* either from the Chief Superintendent of Derry's Royal Ulster Constabulary. But *usually reliable spokesmen from the Bogside insist that the story is accurate*, and *already small groups are gathering* at street corners within the *ghetto* area to *celebrate*, as one of them put it to me, '*the fall of the Bastille*.' (*Freedom* 117–118, my emphasis)

O'Kelly's account occurs at a relatively early stage of *The Freedom of the City*, but from what the audience has already seen or heard, the journalist's version is without any foundation and, to a large extent, fiction. However, Corbett is right when he argues that the perspective chosen by Friel in this play results in evoking the idea in the audience that "one is a witness to the truth of the situation happening inside the Mayor's parlour, a truth to which the other commentators in the play have no access" (143). Instead of concentrating on the plot, the audience shifts its interest towards *how* this misleading description of the events is set up; by mentioning that he is "overlooking" Guildhall Square, O'Kelly claims to be in an ideal position to assess the scene. Despite the careful expression "unconfirmed reports" and the use of conditional clauses, he does not only inform the public of the potential danger but he also

proceeds to interpret the incident as an embarrassment for those in power. Indirectly, he exerts pressure on the police and the army to take measures against the demonstrators, whom he begins to refer to as "terrorists" in the course of his own report. His accusation is, then, addressed to specific people, suggesting that the public expect the Brigadier and the Chief Superintendent to fully control the situation. In a next step, he seeks to strengthen his argument by revealing his source and underlining the trustworthiness of his informers. Furthermore, he draws the spectators' attention to the reaction of the Catholic population who "celebrate" this moment as the onset of a revolution and the seizure of power as the fall of Protestant power and the beginning of Catholic reign. O'Kelly's statements thus incite the Catholic side and indirectly call for political turmoil and the demonstrators' take-over of power. Regardless of whether a television spectator is in favour or against the demonstrators' requests, public opinion is largely shaped by O'Kelly's mis-information because no other source of the public's or the police's information is indicated in the play. When an army officer issues the following statement, unease is evoked in the audience since part of the information appears to be based on O'Kelly's report:

OFFICER. At approximately 15.20 hours today *a band of terrorists took possession* of a portion of the Guildhall. They gained access during a civil disturbance by forcing a side-door in Guildhall Street. It is estimated that *up to forty persons* are involved. [...]
PRESSMAN 2. Are they armed?
OFFICER. Our information is that they *have access to arms*. [...]
PRESSMAN 1. Have you been in touch with them?
OFFICER. No. (*Freedom* 126, my emphasis)

This conversation reveals that mere assumptions guide the army. When the officer admits that they have had no contact with the demonstrators inside the Guildhall, his statements sound even more indebted to O'Kelly's information. The theatre audience has at this stage already witnessed how the three civilians stumbled into the Guildhall and locked themselves into the mayor's parlour to save their own lives. Against this background, the measures taken by the police and the army are shown to be both entirely unnecessary. Unaware of the truth, the security forces seem to react to the pressure by the mass media and their influence on public opinion. According to Winkler,

> Friel shows us exactly how such factors as rumor and counter-rumor, fear and nervousness, mutual suspicion, sectarian assumptions and political punitive thinking combine to create a situation in which shootings are at least comprehensible, if not inevitable or justifiable. (as quoted by McGrath 111)

Obviously, the police and the army cannot risk losing face; after all, O'Kelly has unequivocally made clear what significance the demonstrators' occupation of the Guildhall has for national politics. O'Kelly's statement indirectly and – as indicated by McGrath's interpretation of the scene – "unwittingly" calls for determined action (109). Personal concerns and political implications appear to mingle and to dictate military actions. After O'Kelly's utterance, there is no place for the truth of the peaceful demonstrators among those groups of society who are in control of public authority and power. Trying not to lose face in public, they sacrifice Michael, Lily and Skinner's truths. To ensure that the (Protestant/pro-British) public believe in their official representatives, the power and knowledge of the army or the police must by no means be questioned or undermined. However, juxtaposing the scenes which the three victims experience with the interpretations offered by the official forces and the judge in *The Freedom of the City*, Friel not only calls the official public version into question but also examines the processes and forces which help produce it.

In *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* there is a short passage which presents a slight variation to the mechanisms just described in *The Freedom of the City*. This scene also illustrates how social expectations, or what is perceived as such, can shape a character's actions. In fact, the audience watches Gar sitting in his bedroom, contemplating why he is going to leave Ballybeg for good the next morning. He casts his mind back to the night when he intended to ask Senator Doogan permission to marry his daughter Kate, who will eventually represent "Gar's lost future" in this play as a result of this encounter (Higgins 11). The young man has forgotten no word of his conversation with the Senator; he remembers how pessimistic Kate was for financial reasons when he first asked her to marry him. Later then, she encouraged him to talk to her father and even suggested that he should lie about his true income (*Philadelphia* 29–31). As soon as they return home and are met by Senator Doogan, "*Kate gives Public a last significant look*" and leaves for the kitchen (32). Before Gar has a chance to speak his mind, Kate's father crushes his hopes by mentioning that Kate is, in all likelihood, going to marry Francis King, who will "get the new dispensary job" and whose father is both a medical doctor and an old acquaintance of his from university (32). Instead of sharing Kate and his plans with the Senator, Public Gar becomes as intimidated as in the conversations with his father. Made to feel inferior, Public Gar loses his initial courage and self-confidence. He decides to leave, confirmed by his *alter ego* Private Gar, who concludes that Kate was only fooling him when she encouraged him to talk to her father.

At this stage, Senator Doogan suddenly reveals to Gar that he does not want to take the responsibility for destroying the two young people's future:

DOOGAN. Oh, Gareth – (*Public pauses*). (*Awkwardly, with sincerity*) Kate is our only child, Gareth, and her happiness is all that is important to us —
PRIVATE. (*sings*) 'Give the woman in the bed more porter —'
DOOGAN. What I'm trying to say is that any decision she makes will be her own —
PRIVATE. '– Give the man beside her water, Give the woman in the bed more porter, —'
DOOGAN. Just in case you should think that her mother or I were … in case you might have the idea …. (33–34)

The Senator's comment no longer has an impact on the young man. Convinced that Kate's social background and her parents' expectations do not match the life he can offer her, Private Gar tries to distract himself by singing the folksong *Give the Woman in the Bed More Porter*. Indeed, he shows no reaction when the Senator claims to respect his daughter's wishes. He submits himself to social expectations and public opinion. The Senator's motive for offering Gar the opportunity to ask his consent to marry Kate remains in the dark. Having no access to Doogan's private thoughts, the audience is left to wonder whether the Senator really feels sorry for what he has just said and believes that the two young people deserve a chance after all. As soon as Gar has left Kate's home, the young woman re-enters to inquire whether her boyfriend's proposal has been successful:

KATE. (*Enters down right of Doogan and sees that Gar is no longer there*) Where's Gar?
DOOGAN. He didn't seem anxious to stay.
KATE. But didn't he – did he —?
DOOGAN. No, he didn't. (34)

Although Kate does not finish her sentence, her father knows what she is referring to. This short father-daughter exchange illustrates that the Senator appears to have been fully aware of what was about to happen when Kate first left for the kitchen. The suggestion that he and his wife would not deny Kate her wishes could also have been a back-handed move: sensing that Public Gar would never dare express his own and Kate's hopes if Francis King's name was mentioned, the Senator, from this perspective, uses the power of public opinion to fulfil his private dreams and ambitions. At any right, the prediction that his daughter will soon marry Francis King comes true the day Gar's aunt visits her nephew and invites him to move to Philadelphia with her.

As I have already pointed out, *Dancing at Lughnasa* is another play which discusses the consequences social norms and expectations can have on individuals whose behaviour or circumstances deviate from the norm of the village. Contemplating the principles of criminal justice since the eighteenth century, Foucault, in his study *Discipline and Punish*, asserts that "[t]he

power of the norm appears through the disciplines" and concludes that "[l]ike surveillance and with it, normalization becomes one of the great instruments of power at the end of the classical age" (184). In fact, in Friel's plays, those who fail to fulfil the community's expectations, face disapproval and are exposed to public pressure or believe themselves to be exposed to it. Although the Ballybeg community, which is described by Lojek as "a patriarchal, claustrophobic society," does not directly feature in *Dancing at Lughnasa*, public opinion is mirrored through Aunt Kate ("Unfinished Revolution" 79). Her decisions and actions betray her fears of public disapproval and indicate how much she suffers from public pressure. Kate, whom Murray refers to as "too much the product of the system which denies her support," knows that in as remote a society as the one in Ballybeg privateness is a treasure and gossip omnipresent ("Recovering Tremors" 36). Being asked by their brother how information could possibly spread in this environment, Kate's sister Maggie simply replies: "I wouldn't worry about that. Words get about very quickly" (*Dancing* 72). The truth of this statement proves to be at the core of Kate's insecurity. In fact, Kate resembles the prototypical inmate of Jeremy Bentham's prison, which is examined in Foucault's essay "Panopticism." Trapped in a cell, the inmate is seen by the supervisor and is "the object of information, never a subject in communication" (*Discipline and Punish* 200). In *Dancing at Lughnasa*, Ballybeg becomes similar to the central tower in the Panoptic building, where "the inmate will constantly have before his eyes the tall outline of the central tower from which he is spied upon" (201). Thus, Kate suffers from society's constant surveillance. In fact, the only moment when she seems to be at ease with herself and her situation is when she starts to dance around the table with her sisters in the middle of the play. Emphasising the significance the act of dancing has in this play, Niel claims that "[d]ancing [...] always offers an opportunity to break loose from the restricting rules of convention and, if only for a short period of time, provides the individual with freedom" ("Brian Friel" 45, my translation).[30] However, except for this rare moment, identified by Higgins as "a silent form of defiance," Kate never succeeds in forgetting the presence of Ballybeg and the constraints of the community which the village represents to her (87). Kate feels haunted like an inmate of the Panopticon who "must never know whether he is being looked at at any one moment; but he must be sure that he may always be so" (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 201). Having internalised the power relations in Ballybeg, Kate can be seen as a figure who "becomes the principle of [her] own

[30] Original: Tanzen [...] bietet immer eine Möglichkeit, aus den beengenden Regeln der Konvention auszubrechen und der eigenen Person zumindest für kurze Zeit einen Freiraum zu geben (45).

subjection" in that the public pressure which she feels exposed to rules her entire behaviour (203).

Aware of how powerful public pressure can be, Kate is anxious that the family do not deviate from normal Ballybeg behaviour. When the five Mundy sisters acquire their first wireless set and are, as Michael says, "obsessed" with it, his aunt Maggie suggests calling it "Lugh after the old Celtic God of the Harvest" (*Dancing* 7). Kate strongly disapproves of this idea and declares that "it would be sinful to christen an inanimate object with any kind of name, not to talk of a pagan god" (7). Moreover, aiming at conformity with the other members of the Ballybeg community, she scolds her sisters for using too many batteries for their new wireless set: "The man in the shop says we go through these things quicker than anyone in Ballybeg" (28). Public pressure thus encroaches on her private life. Hence, *Dancing at Lughnasa* demonstrates that, for Kate, privateness is no longer associated with shelter and security within her own home. She cannot bear the idea of her family's lifestyle and behaviour being subjected to close scrutiny by the community. Michael, the narrator, indeed admits that, since their manners and activities differed from the majority of the community, the family were, indeed, publicly denounced. He explains that most importantly the aunts came in for criticism because of his illegitimacy; the aunts had "to bear the shame Mother [i.e. Michael's mother] brought on the household by having me – as it was called then – out of wedlock" (17). This comment again recalls Foucault's notion that "[i]n a disciplinary régime [...] individualization is 'descending'" insofar as "the child is more individualized than the adult, the patient more than the healthy man, the madman and the delinquent more than the normal and the non-delinquent" (*Discipline and Punish* 193). In fact, the "constant division between the normal and the abnormal" is powerfully manifested with respect to the Mundy family (199). By giving birth to Michael, Chris has broken the unwritten rules of Ballybeg. Due to her conduct, the five sisters are turned into social outsiders whose moves and behaviour are carefully studied by the other members of the community.

When Michael's father visits his son a few times that summer, Kate's frustration and her dudgeon over the family's situation are vented on Gerry. In fact, she even refuses to call Gerry by name, repeatedly calling him a "bastard" and "creature" who is not worth anything: "Seems to me the beasts of the field have more concern for their young than that creature has" (*Dancing* 55). One of her sisters finally loses her patience with Kate's self-righteous conduct: "Do you ever listen to yourself, Kate? You are such a damned righteous bitch! And his name is Gerry! – Gerry! – Gerry!" (55) Exercising her linguistic power by denying Gerry the right to his own name and, in a wider sense, to an identity and existence allows Kate to take revenge on Michael's father for depriving

them of their place within the community. Referring to Gerry as a "creature" and comparing him to "beasts in the field," underlines that, from Kate's standpoint, he is more like an animal than a human being because he has fathered an illegitimate child.

A similar attitude defines Kate's relationship to Dan Bradley, a married man, with whom Aunt Rose 'disappears' one afternoon. Kate insists that Maggie, who is dreadfully worried about their mentally retarded sister's whereabouts, must not inform the police. Trying to prevent her family from being further humiliated by negative publicity, Kate panics and comes across as quite unsympathetic. Dehumanising Dan Bradley and dismissing her sister's behaviour, she decides: "You're going to no police, Maggie. If she's mixed up with that Bradley creature, I'm not going to have it broadcast all over –" (86). Thus, Kate's fear of the possible public reaction to Rose's conduct outweighs the concerns for her sister and, once more, proves that for her Ballybeg is a place where "thousands of eyes [are] posted everywhere" exposing her family to "permanent, exhaustive, omnipresent surveillance" (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 214).

Afraid the family's reputation could be damaged, Kate also decides they had indeed better not enjoy themselves at the harvest dance:

> Do you want the whole countryside to be laughing at us? – women of our years? – mature women, *dancing*? What's come over you all? And this is Father Jack's home – we must never forget that – ever. No, no, we're going to no harvest dance. (25, original emphasis)

Fearing that their attendance could provoke public disapproval or further sneering within the community, Kate rebukes her sister for even thinking of partaking in such an event:

> And what pagan practices they have are no concern of ours – none whatever! It's a sorry day to hear talk like that in a Christian home, a Catholic home! All I can say is that I'm shocked and disappointed to hear you repeating rubbish like that, Rose. (29)

Kate believes they cannot afford to offer any opportunity for gossip and attract any additional attention. She feels so insecure in this community that she is convinced their participation in a pagan dance festival would be inappropriate, despite the fact that she personally informs the rest of the family that everyone else in Ballybeg actually plans to attend the festival (20). However, in her opinion, Father Jack should hail from a respected and serious household. Michael agrees that, for many years, his profession had indeed been a source of joy and the family's status always rose in the eyes of the community whenever Uncle Jack's name was mentioned:

> And every so often when a story would appear in the *Donegal Enquirer* about 'our own leper priest', as they called him – because Ballybeg was proud of him, the whole of Donegal was proud of him – it was only natural that our family would enjoy a small share of that fame – it gave us that little bit of status in the eyes of the parish. (17)

Nonetheless, the excitement over Father Jack's return to Ballybeg – similar to Cass McGuire's homecoming – is transformed into an embarrassment for the family. The inhabitants of the remote village who initially planned "to have a great public welcome" for Jack with "flags, bands, speeches, everything" soon change their minds when they realise that Jack is strangely altered, having adopted pagan rituals and ceremonies in Ryanga (31). Michael admits that "[i]n fact he never said Mass again. And the neighbours stopped enquiring about him. And his name never again appeared in the *Donegal Enquirer*. And of course there was never a civic reception with bands and flags and speeches" (92). Rather than boosting his sisters' reputation, Jack disgraces the family. By no longer mentioning his name in public, the Ballybeg community once again underlines the fact that Kate's fears and premonition must not be downplayed in *Dancing at Lughnasa*. Indeed, I fully agree with Harris' interpretation of Kate's character as the "undisputed champion of Christianity and the forces of repression" whose "excessive concern with 'propriety' [...], [...] opposition to dancing, and [...] virulent anti-paganism are part of her plan to 'keep the home together'" (32).

Despite the fact that thoughts and behaviour that deviate from the norm are judged negatively in *Dancing at Lughnasa*, this is not a rule which applies per se to Friel's plays. *Give Me Your Answer, Do!* examines the moral standards of Ballybeg society, the mechanisms which are at work in developing public opinion and finally the public's fascination with the private, the unusual or the scandalous. At the outset, Tom, the main protagonist, has been unable to finish his latest novel for five years. Due to his writer's block, he and his wife risk losing the financial means to support their daughter in her mental institution. To resolve their financial situation, Tom is thinking of selling his manuscripts to a company in Texas. Estimating the value of Tom's archive on behalf of the Texan company, David Knight has spent a week with Tom and Daisy. Although David has offered Tom's friend Garret – a "popular but questionable artist" – a princely sum for his manuscripts, he appears reluctant to buy in Tom's case (Bertha and Morse 24). Tom's consternation grows. The presence of David, whom he has regarded as an intruder from the beginning, makes Tom feel nervous and awkward. Moreover, by allowing David access to his most private as well as intimate world and life, Tom believes that he has provided David with the power to evaluate his 'naked' truth: "But the really galling thing is that I gave him absolute freedom to examine every private detail of my entire career:

every stumbling first draft, every final proof copy, every letter, every invitation, every rejection" (*Give* 23). A conversation between Daisy and Tom further illustrates that David's opinion and the price he might offer for the archive surpass the couple's financial concerns. Daisy knows that they are directly related to Tom's self-confidence:

> So my hope would be that he makes you a worthy offer – just for your sake, only for your sake. Because that acknowledgement, that affirmation might give you – whatever it is – the courage? – the equilibrium? – the necessary self-esteem? – just to hold on. Isn't that what everybody needs? So for that reason alone I really hope he does buy the stuff. (24)

Daisy then confronts Tom with David's statement that "a *complete* archive [is] always more valuable" and urges him to allow David see the two secret manuscripts written in the period after the onset of Bridget's illness (24, my emphasis). Tom hesitates, but Daisy suggests that to protect himself he could still consider granting the readers restricted access only: "You've shown them to nobody; I know that. But they are part of the archive. And you could insist that nobody would have access to them for so many years" (25). Tom finally succumbs, explaining to David and his closest friends that he feels ashamed of the two manuscripts which only Daisy has read so far because of their "pornographic" nature (58). Despite Tom's unease, David, who at some stage reveals that, just like Tom's daughter, he had "a little bit of a setback" with regard to his mental health a few years before, is thrilled with the novels and offers the writer an astronomical price for his archive (40). This phenomenon underlines how fascinating access to a character's most private or intimate sphere is for the public. *Give Me Your Answer, Do!* suggests that for David (and the public) the most valuable text is one where individuals exploit their unconscious and bare their souls exploring every facet of their most intimate and painful sensations. David does, in fact, not care about Tom's insecurities and anxiety over publicising his entire archive. However, it is worth mentioning that David, who represents the public taste in this play, must have experienced his own emotional turmoil when he had his mental breakdown. He tells Daisy's mother, a medical doctor, that at a time when he was both professionally and financially rather successful "a funny thing happened. My legs suddenly melted. And I found myself sitting on the pavement. And I couldn't remember my name. (*Laughs*) Three weeks before I knew who I was! Ridiculous, isn't it?" (41) Praising Tom's entire work, David argues that, after reading the two unpublished novels, both of which might actually verbalise some of the emotions and feelings he himself experienced during his breakdown, "[e]verything has suddenly fallen into place [...] Everything is of a piece – I can see that now. A complete archive – a wonderful archive" (63). Knowing

that texts which strip the individual of his privacy will sell, David makes it impossible for a human being to keep private his personal grief and sorrows.

From Daisy and Tom's point of view, David not only judges the quality of Tom's writing, but indirectly also evaluates how well Daisy and Tom have managed since their daughter fell ill. To be able to stay close to Bridget, they chose homes that became "more and more isolated and more decayed and of course cheaper" (28). This description of the fourteen places they have inhabited since Bridget's birth indicates how their position in society has diminished as a result of Bridget's illness and how by yielding to public pressure they were gradually turned into social outcasts. Moreover, talking to her mother, Daisy admits that she hardly ever goes to visit her daughter because she cannot bear seeing Bridget in such bad condition. By adding the expression "[c]owardly, I know," Daisy implies that – judged by moral standards – she feels incapable of meeting the public's expectations as a mother (32). Apart from having to cope with her own conscience in this context, it hurts Daisy that her actions, her passivity, in fact her entire personality are assessed from the outside. Having promised David to persuade Tom to sell his archive, Daisy suddenly changes her mind:

> Oh, no, he mustn't sell. Of course he mustn't sell. There are reasons why he wants to sell and those reasons are valid reasons and understandable and very persuasive. A better place for Bridget. […] But we were both deluded. Indeed we were. A better place for Bridget? But Bridget is beyond knowing, isn't she? And somehow, somehow bills will always be met. And what does a little physical discomfort matter? Really not a lot. But to sell for an affirmation, for an answer, to be free of that grinding uncertainty, that would be so wrong for him and so wrong for his work. (79)

The statement underlines that, at this moment, Daisy decides that she will no longer allow public pressure or opinion to rule their lives. She is convinced that the public should not have the right to judge Tom's work. Instead, she finds what seems the ideal solution for Tom and herself. She earns the money for Bridget's institution by offering intensive piano lessons to the most talented young pianists all over the world (83). This turns out to be an indirect way of fulfilling her maternal duties. As a side effect, this commitment of hers for the good of her daughter gains her the public respect she was denied before, helps her to reduce her self-accusation and frees the couple of public influence and pressure. Consequently, Tom does not have to sell his archive and, in contrast to his friend Garret, remains independent. Garret, who has sold his archive, dreams of writing a book about Wittgenstein despite being aware that his audience would not appreciate his career turning in this direction: "[M]y convenant with the great warm public – that's the problem. We're woven into each other. I created the taste by which they now assess

me" (71). The public success controls Garret; he is made the readers' slave. Unlike Garret, Tom ends up preserving his artistic and creative independence to follow his private interests. He is not compelled to write what the public expects of him, what they should, in all likelihood, appreciate or what they will consider complements his oeuvre.

As in *Dancing at Lughnasa*, the public plays an indirect role in *Aristocrats* in that public expectations and pressure are mirrored by the main protagonists' actions and their behaviour. Tom Hoffnung, an American academic, who intends to record the knowledge of several upper class families, is currently staying with the O'Donnell family. Conducting some research for his forthcoming publication on the "[r]ecurring cultural, political and social modes in the upper strata of Roman Catholic society in rural Ireland since the act of Catholic Emancipation," Tom traces the family's famous acquaintances to categorise or label their relations and finally to make his findings publicly accessible (*Aristocrats* 265). For financial reasons, Judith O'Donnell, on behalf of her generation of the O'Donnell family, has invited Tom to "record the truth" (313). However, the truth, as always in Friel's work, cannot be reached: the public and private perspectives of the family history are too divergent. In fact, as Emmert highlights, in *Aristocrats*, an approach to history aiming at objectivity is contrasted with the collective memories based on family myths (115). Moreover, Tom's presence is disturbing and irritating for the young people as the history of the O'Donnell family is one of rapid descent: "Great Grandfather – Lord Chief Justice; Grandfather – Circuit Court Judge; Father – simple District Justice; Casimir – failed solicitor" (295). Pondering this development and the heavy burden imposed on Casimir by his ancestors, Eamon, Casimir's brother-in-law, concludes: "D'you know, Professor, I've often wondered: if we had had children and they wanted to be part of the family legal tradition, the only option open to them would have been as criminals" (295). As they have both suffered from public opinion in the past, Eamon and Casimir are particularly suspicious of Tom's project; therefore, the atmosphere among the male characters in the play is not without tension. While Casimir has been described in public as "peculiar," Eamon is repeatedly shown to yield to public opinion and consider himself inferior to the O'Donnell family (310).

Reminiscing his childhood experiences, Casimir reveals that his father shattered his sense of identity at an early stage in his life when he told him: "Had you been born down there, you'd have become the village idiot. Fortunately for you, you were born here and we can absorb you" (310). Normally Casimir manages to hide his insecurity behind a nonchalant behaviour. However, because Tom is primarily interested in power and success, both of which Casimir lacks, their personalities do not match at all. When Tom, whose academic conduct Eamon mocks because he displays a

great tendency to "'[c]heck', 'recheck', 'double-check', 'cross-check'" every piece of information he is given, mentions that occasionally Casimir's memory seems to fuse with his imagination, the young man is at a complete loss as to how to react (312). In fact, in one of his conversations with Tom, Casimir claims that he "vividly" remembers Yeats' visits (267 and 308). Although Tom tries not to turn his statement into a face-threatening act for Casimir when confronting him with his objectified truth, Tom's effort to remedy the situation is in vain:

> TOM. Well, you were born on 1st April, 1939.
> CASIMIR. Good heavens – don't I know! All Fools day! Yes?
> TOM. And Yeats died the same year. Two months earlier. I've double checked it. (*He looks up from his notes. Casimir is staring at him. Pause.*) I make little mistakes like that all the time myself. […] I mean a man like Yeats is a visitor to your home, a friend of the family, you hear a lot of talk about him, and naturally after a time, naturally you come to think you actually… I've some correspondence to catch up with. Forgive me. (309)

Eamon, who shares Casimir's dislike of the American academic, regards Tom as a prying intruder whose detailed and direct questions are inappropriate and insensitive. Moreover, he believes that "[t]here are certain things, certain truths, […] that are beyond Tom's kind of scrutiny" (309–310). Tom's visit to the Big Hall, indeed, draws attention to conflicting interests; while the O'Donnells are eager to keep their privacy, Tom believes that there is a public interest in this family's private lives. The facts or knowledge that Tom is looking for are unfortunately of a quality that the family members cannot offer. Their experiences and memories are selective, highly personal and in some cases even fictional. In this sense, *Aristocrats*, according to Kimmer, sheds light on "how an individual responds when the past overshadows the present, reducing accepted facts into personal myths" (195). The critic further explains that, for the individual members of the O'Donnell family, "creating these stories is the only way that the current generation can claim Ballybeg Hall as their own and, due to economic realities, take an active role in maintaining the family history" (206). The knowledge or truth Tom wants the public to have access to, however, will only touch the family's personal memories or experiences superficially, but will not really manage to capture *their* version of truth. The family's personal sentiments will remain hidden in Tom's book since much of the intimate information given to Tom is of little value for outsiders.

At the same time, the play ironically shows that Tom considers those characters inferior who possess what he would label 'valid' information.

Eamon, for example, is a "local [...] from [Ballybeg] village," whose promising future as a diplomat came to an abrupt end when he joined the civil rights movement (*Aristocrats* 271). Although he grew up with the O'Donnell children because his grandmother "[w]orked all her life as a maid here in the Hall," Eamon still feels intimidated by this house (276). McGrath argues that "Eamon has steeped himself in the tradition to the point that he knows more about it than the O'Donnells" because he "absorbed both his knowledge and infatuation with Ballybeg Hall from his grandmother" (153). For this reason, he recommends that Tom draw on his grandmother's

> fund of stories and information. [...] Carriages, balls, receptions, weddings, christenings, feasts, deaths, trips to Rome, musical evenings, tennis – that's the mythology I was nurtured on all my life, day after day, year after year – the life of the 'quality' – that's how she pronounces it, with a flat 'a'. A strange and marvellous education for a wee country boy, wasn't it? (*Aristocrats* 276)

Tom shows no reaction to Eamon's suggestion indicating that, in his opinion, history is not written by a housemaid. This attitude, which renews Eamon's feeling of inferiority and his hostility towards Tom, implies that the voice of Eamon's grandmother does not have the same impact as an aristocrat's memories. Tom's unwillingness to interview the young man's grandmother illustrates Foucault's notion that power produces knowledge or truth; in this play, the thoughts of individuals who lack the social position of the O'Donnell family are regarded as irrelevant (Foucault, "Truth and Power" 131). The play, therefore, underlines that it is not the most knowledgeable people who produce facts and truth; these aspects remain an instrument of the powerful. Ridiculing Tom's work as well as the type of receptions from which he used to be excluded as a child, Eamon cynically mentions that, from a public point of view, some of the O'Donnell visitors were of a doubtful honour or are a myth: "Begging your pardon, your eminence, your worship, your holiness – sorry, Shakespeare, Lenin, Mickey Mouse, Marilyn Monroe – [...] Like walking through Madame Tussaud's, isn't it, Professor? Or a bloody mine-field?" (*Aristocrats* 274) Eamon's cynicism underlines that, in his opinion, Tom is mainly interested in name-dropping and does not care about the actual experiences the family had. In Eamon's opinion, not only does Tom disregard the "bloody mine-field" the O'Donnell family and their visitors have left behind because he is blinded by their fame and celebrity, but refusing to talk to the powerless representatives of Ballybeg, the academic also fails to grasp the enormous impact the family's myths and narratives have had in establishing these characters' identity and sense of history.

3. Manifestations of Power and Control

Having analysed how public pressure affects a character's behaviour, I will now turn to characters in Friel's plays who either have or seek power and control. Using their authority, these figures influence or rule other characters' lives according to their ideas and norms. The most typical examples of dominance or oppression in Friel are found within families; whether deliberately or not, one member of the family (usually the father or the mother) superimposes his or her power on the other characters and thereby considerably reduces their quality of life. For the oppressed, such as Casimir or Judith in *Aristocrats*, Gar in *Philadelphia*, *Here I Come!* and Hanna or Andy in "Losers," home is no longer a private space associated with protection, security and cosiness but a hostile place identified with the powerful figure.

In "Losers" (the second short play in *Lovers*), Mrs Wilson, nursed by her daughter Hanna, governs the household from her bed on the second floor of the house. Despite her physical handicap, she is in full command of her family's life. Her opponent, Hanna's husband Andy Tracey, functions as a homodiegetic narrator. Apart from being able to structure the narrative and disclose his private truth, he is deprived of any power. At the beginning of the play, Andy, "replicating a habit of the deceased Mr. Wilson," is sitting in the back yard of the house (O'Brien, *Friel* 63):

> *He is staring fixedly through a pair of binoculars at the grey stone wall, which is only a few yards from where he is sitting. It becomes obvious that he is watching nothing: there is nothing to watch, and when he becomes aware of the audience, he lowers the glasses slowly, looks at the audience, glances cautiously over his shoulder at the kitchen to make sure that no one in the house overhears him, and then speaks directly and confidentially down to the auditorium.* ("Losers" 51)

Andy's demeanour of glancing "cautiously over his shoulder" to ensure he is not caught red-handed when informing the audience of his personal insights and opinions underlines that he is always on guard in the Wilson household. Andy feels intimidated because he is, as Dantanus argues, "outnumbered and outwitted by the women," namely by his mother-in-law, his wife and their neighbour Cissy (113). In fact, as in *The Loves of Cass McGuire*, for instance, the audience serves as Andy's only confidant. Describing his removal to the back yard as a "gesture" which Hanna "respects" by leaving him alone, Andy tells the audience how Mrs Wilson found her husband "dead […] just three years ago, slumped in a chair" in the same back yard where he himself now prefers to spend his time ("Losers" 52). Discovering her dead husband, Hanna's mother, according to Andy, "got such a bloody fright that she collapsed and took to the bed for good and hasn't risen since" (53). The narrator tells the audience that

Mr Wilson's death greatly altered his relationship with Hanna, whom he had only started courting shortly before her father passed away:

> [W]ith the aul' fella [i.e. Hanna's father] dying and the aul' woman [i.e. Hanna's mother] taking to the bed, like we couldn't go out to the pictures nor dances nor nothing like any other couple; so I started coming here every evening. And this is where we done [sic] our courting, in there, on the couch. (53)

Despite the fact that at the beginning of their relationship Hanna and Andy are already in their late forties or early fifties, Mrs Wilson, a fervent follower to the tenets of the Catholic Church, begins to control and terrorise the two lovers soon after her husband's death.

Sensing that the power structure and her position in the family are endangered by her husband's death and, most importantly, by her daughter's relationship with Andy, Mrs Wilson intrudes on their private lives. In fact, she goes to great lengths to prevent the couple from establishing a feeling of intimacy with each other. As the lovers' intimacy could undermine her influence in the house, the old lady seems determined to keep Hanna and Andy from forming a bond, which could potentially harm her in that it would shift the power balance in the family and overturn the order and values she represents. In his study of family conflicts in literature, von Matt claims that 'reprobate sons' [verkommene Söhne] and 'unruly daughters' [missratene Töchter] are defined by representing "a piece of fundamental dis-order or counter-order" within the parents' existing order, and are, therefore, associated with the *other* (23, my translation).[31] Moreover, he stresses that if the younger generation in a family questions the patriarchal system within their home, parents tend to rule the household with iron will, striving to preserve the old order and power structure. In "Losers," Mrs Wilson, indeed, defends her power and her system of beliefs vigorously: she repeatedly disturbs the lovers' twosomeness by ringing a bell – "*not a tinkling little bell, but a huge brass bell with a long wooden handle*" – to call for her daughter Hanna (55). Referring to her frequent usage of this bell, Andy claims that

> nine times out of ten, you know, she didn't want a damn thing [...]. You see, every sound down here carries straight up to her room; and we discovered that it was the long silences made her suspicious. That's the way with a lot of pious aul' women – they have wild dirty imaginations. (55)

Hence, having an ordinary conversation is impossible for Hanna and Andy. After all, normal dialogues contain moments of silence, a characteristic which is revealed to be incompatible with the circumstances given in this family. Afraid of

[31] Original: ein Stück elementarer Un-Ordnung oder Gegen-Ordnung (23).

Mrs Wilson's constant intrusion, the two lovers are forced to produce endless chains of sounds instead of conversing together; consequently, Andy and Hanna's dialogue ends up having no meaning. In fact, one night, to mislead his mother-in-law, Andy begins reciting Thomas Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* over and over again. However, the lovers are in a desperate situation, as this elegy is the only poem Andy knows by heart. As long as Andy keeps rattling the same poem off with Hanna throwing in the odd word every now and then "to make it sound natural," the two lovers are safe (56), but as soon as Andy lapses into silence or the couple start kissing, Mrs Wilson interrupts this intimate moment by ringing her bell "to keep Hanna on the hop" (55). In an attempt to tie her daughter closer to her by constantly calling for her with the ringing of her bell, Mrs Wilson superimposes her needs, symbolised by jingling, on Hanna and Andy (44). As a result of Mrs Wilson's frequent usage of the bell, the two lovers in this play are deprived of their freedom to spend their spare time as they like. Nevertheless, looking back, Andy claims that these times of courting "were good times" (56). After all, eluding Mrs Wilson's surveillance, the lovers are able to share some secret intimacy. It thrills and unites them to deceive Hanna's mother, who thinks that they are involved in a discussion whenever she hears their voices. Therefore, quite against her intention, Hanna's mother increases the degree of intimacy and confidentiality between Hanna and Andy with her frequent jingling and tinkling.

After the wedding, which legally acknowledges Hanna's bond with Andy and thus appears to intensify Mrs Wilson's unease and fears with regard to her powerful position in the family, Mrs Wilson changes her strategy. Trying hard to regain control and remain in power as head of the family, Mrs Wilson seeks to undo the development which has taken place between Andy and her daughter. Thus, over the next four years of their married life, she begins to ring her bell whenever she can hear Andy and Hanna exchanging some words. In order to enjoy some peace and quiet, the couple soon have to sit together in deafening silence. Finally, however, Mrs Wilson succeeds in estranging Hanna from her husband and in binding her daughter closer to herself. Following the credo "[a] girl's best friend is her mother," the atmosphere in the house gets bleak and dreary (59). As the lovers lack the fantasy they displayed during their time of courting, Andy's optimism diminishes to the point where Mrs Wilson's dominant behaviour ironically triggers the kind of reaction from her son-in-law she has tried to prevent since her husband's death by ruling the family with her iron will.

One night, openly attempting to usurp the old order symbolised by his mother-in-law, Andy opts for the prototypical reprobate behaviour described by von Matt. Opposing Mrs Wilson and her daughter, who have adopted the local priest's conviction that "the family that prays together stays together,"

Andy decides to put an end to the customary "Rosary caper" in the evenings (66 and 69). Referring to a newspaper article that claims that "even the Pope can make a mistake" and that the Vatican, therefore, urges all Roman Catholics to discontinue "the devotion [...] to Saint Philomena [...] at once because there is little or no evidence that such a person ever existed," Andy informs the women that he will no longer adhere to the belief in Saint Philomena (70). However, Andy's revolution fails to destroy their praying together or the entire system of beliefs and morals in the family. Instead of supporting her husband, Hanna further withdraws from Andy and bonds with her mother and their neighbour Cissy, who measures her religiosity against Mrs Wilson's example. Andy thus loses his position and the little influence he had on the relationship with his wife. In fact, after this incidence, Andy ends up killing most of his time observing birds in the back yard through late Mr Wilson's binoculars, while Hanna adopts her mother's fanatic religiousness and spends her spare time in her mother's bedroom. Despite the crucial role religion plays in the house, no love or cosiness is left in the family. The home becomes a cool and impersonal place. Pursuing her own aims, Mrs Wilson abuses her powerful position; keeping her daughter and her son-in-law under permanent surveillance, she deprives them of any privacy and thereby destroys their love for each other.

Lying upstairs, Mrs Wilson cannot use sight to control her daughter and Andy, but she relies entirely on sounds. These sounds can be misleading, as the permanent reciting of Thomas Gray's poem proves. Nevertheless, the power Hanna's mother possesses is uncanny: Hanna and Andy constantly feel observed and are rather irritated by Mrs Wilson, who listens to the sounds they make. Their relationship cannot develop. Like Kate in *Dancing at Lughnasa*, they resemble the inmates of the Panopticon who never know whether they are observed or supervised at the moment, and generally behave as if they might always be so (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 201). Before their marriage, they have to speak without interruption; afterwards they are forced to let their communication deteriorate altogether. As "victims of a narrowly pietistic religious observance and a society which promotes it," the lovers' dream of sharing privateness is lost within a few years; they cannot share intimacy and the audience never sees them involved in confidential intercourse (Dantanus 113). Thus, in the two short plays in *Lovers*, Friel "[counterpoints] the optimism of the young Mag and Joe in 'Winners' (the first half) with the frustration and disillusionment of the older Andy and Hanna in 'Losers'" (Grant 17). Unlike the two *winners*, Mag and Joe, whose untimely deaths prevent their love from being affected by everyday life, Andy and Hanna are *losers* because they "live to regret their passions" and allow their love as well as

their alternative conceptions of life and values to be sacrificed for the sake of the old order represented by Mrs Wilson's norms and values (Harris 55).

A remarkable variation of the theme of surveillance as a means of manifesting power is explored in *Aristocrats*, where the family's former aura of authority and significance is personified by the mostly "unseen figure of the Father" (Corbett 83). Again, there is a marked contrast between District Justice O'Donnell's physical powerlessness and his conduct. Like Mrs Wilson, the once powerful and now somewhat mentally disturbed *pater familias* is bound to his bed due to his poor health. For most of the play, the former judge's voice is transmitted by a technical device, a "yoke," which several characters refer to as a "baby-alarm" (*Aristocrats* 278). Thus, his speech seems to have become part of "the fabric of the building" (Corbett 83). Metonymically, it could be argued that O'Donnell's rapidly decreasing state of health is linked with the decay of his house. Moreover, the installation of the baby-alarm exemplifies how the power structure within the family is reversed, as "the surveillance system which degrades him [i. e. the judge] to a child" allows the children to use this technical tool to monitor – or to spy on – their father (Emmert 119, my translation).[32] Meditating the term "baby-alarm" and its "aptness in the circumstances" where both the house and the family are past their prime, Eamon, O'Donnell's son-in-law and a representative of the peasant community in Ballybeg, even mentions the former judge's regression to a stage of his childhood on the level of the plot:

> I suppose baby-alarm has an aptness in the circumstances. But there's another word – what's the name I'm looking for? – what do you call the peep-hole in a prison door? Judas hole! That's it. Would that be more appropriate? But then we'd have to decide who's spying on whom, wouldn't we? No; let's keep baby-alarm. (*Aristocrats* 279)

The terms *peep-hole* or *Judas hole* both call to mind the power of surveillance as described by Foucault and make clear that the question of authority in this play is an ambivalent one (*Discipline and Punish* 201). However, as the children's supervision and the remaining authority of the father are based on sound rather than sight, I would argue that *peep-hole* and *Judas hole* have misleading connotations. Emphasising O'Donnell's powerlessness as the device deprives him of privacy, Eamon, in my opinion, rightly concludes that *baby-alarm* is the most accurate expression in this context. Since the tool enables everyone to listen to his mumbling and to the disclosure of his most secret thoughts, not only is the judge supervised, but his formerly uncontested authority is simultaneously also undermined.

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[32] Original: [d]ie Überwachungsanlage, die ihn zum Kind degradiert (119).

Regardless of O'Donnell's state of mind and regardless of the younger generation's comments on supervising their father by means of a *baby-alarm*, the authority of the head of the family is not lost entirely. Whereas O'Donnell's speaking is occasionally described as "*incoherent mumbling*," it still comes across as "*suddenly very loud and very authoritative*" at other times (*Aristocrats* 256 and 258). In these situations, the *pater familias*, unwittingly, still controls the house: his voice regularly startles his children and momentarily silences their private conversations downstairs. Casimir's attitude towards his father, for instance, has not changed: the judge's piercing voice still makes him panic and causes him to feel uneasy at home. Two short scenes illustrate that Casimir has never stopped acting like a small boy in this house and that he is always anxious to obey and please his domineering father. Both examples exploit the comicality of the situation because the father no longer means what he says. In the first case, Casimir, intending to reach his wife in Germany, is fiddling with the handle on the phone when his father bawls and ends up highly disconcerting his son:

FATHER. Don't touch that!
(*Casimir drops the phone in panic and terror.*)
CASIMIR. Christ! Ha-ha. O my God! That – that – that's –
TOM. It's only the baby-alarm.
CASIMIR. I thought for a moment Father was – was – was –
TOM. Maybe I should turn it down a bit.
CASIMIR. God, it's eerie – that's what it is – eerie – eerie – (263)

Casimir's reaction reveals that being addressed by his father has never stopped being an intimidating and frightening experience for him. In fact, he begins to stammer and is obviously embarrassed about his father's enormous influence over him. Not even the years abroad have helped to free him from the trauma of failing in the eyes of his powerful father:

(*Casimir enters the study, carrying a large tray* [. . .] *his chant is interrupted by Father's clear and commanding voice.*)
FATHER. Casimir!
(*Casimir jumps to attention; rigid, terrified.*)
CASIMIR. Yes sir!
FATHER. Come to the library at once. I wish to speak to you.
(*Casimir now realizes that the voice has come from the speaker.*)
CASIMIR. Christ . . . oh-oh-oh my God . . . Ha-ha. Isn't that a very comical joke – I almost stood to attention – I almost stood –
(*He looks round at the others who are staring at him. He tries to smile. He is totally lost. He looks at the tray; then sinks to the ground with it, ending in a kneeling position.*)
CASIMIR. That's the second time I was caught – the second time – (282)

Incapable of relaxing in the powerful presence of his father, Casimir literally crouches under the weight. His behaviour further implies that the father's education methods must have been strict and fierce and that, in Casimir's eyes, the term *home* bears the same negative connotations as it does for Gar in *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* Rather than shelter and homeliness, *home*, for Casimir, means determination and terror and is associated with a sense of being useless, although, in contrast to Mrs Wilson's situation in "Losers," District Justice O'Donnell's power is a fake at this stage in his life. Eamon, O'Donnell's son-in-law, also admits that the house, embodied by O'Donnell's powerful presence and his strict and "unspoken" principles, has always had a daunting effect on him:

> I'm talking too much, amn't I (*Pause*.) I always talk too much in this house, don't I? Is it because I'm still intimidated by it? (*Pause*.) And this was always a house of reticence, of things unspoken, wasn't it? (*Aristocrats* 279)

The use of the word "intimidated," on the one hand, hints at some sort of nervousness as well as at the awe which – with respect to the history of the house and the superior social position of its inhabitants – used to be evoked in Eamon whenever he visited the house. On the other hand, however, mentioning the lack of communication among its inhabitants, the "reticence" and "things unspoken" in District Justice O'Donnell's home and family, Eamon's choice of word also points toward his memories of frightening and eerie experiences in the house. In this sense, the play indeed "dramatises their [i. e. the younger generation's] struggle to come to terms with an oppressive, patriarchal authority which has controlled their personal and collective histories" (Andrews, *Art* 149).

As in Mrs Wilson's case in "Losers," District Justice O'Donnell's power is linked with sound. Contrary to Mrs Wilson, who has reached a position of nearly unrestricted power in her household towards the end of the play, sound in *Aristocrats* allows O'Donnell and his children to control each other. Moreover, due to his state of mind, the former judge has, in fact, lost the ability to handle the authority granted to him. As "a voice without a body," he can no longer pursue his interests and exercise his powerful position (Corbett 75). Unlike her brother Casimir and her husband Eamon, Alice has actually entered her father's bedroom and seen him with her own eyes. Shocked by this encounter, she immediately denies her father the air of authority which he managed to wield by means of sound: "[H]e was always such a big strong man with such power, such authority; and then to see him lying there, so flat under the clothes, with his mouth open –" (*Aristocrats* 289). Alice thus recognises that her father's former power and impact is definitely crumbling.

District Justice O'Donnell's life appears to have started falling into disarray when his eldest daughter, Judith O'Donnell, "took part in the Battle of the Bogside" and he suffered his first stroke (272). Abandoning the family, then consisting of her father, her uncle and her youngest sister Claire, Judith "joined the people in the streets fighting the police" (272). Just as Andy's refusal to pray to Saint Philomena in "Losers" may be regarded as a revolutionary act, O'Donnell's eldest daughter is likewise understood to have called the old order into question by bonding with "the civil rights movement" (272). Seven months after participating in the civil rights campaign, Judith – in her father's opinion and presumably in the eyes of other public authorities – brought even more shame on the family as the mother of an illegitimate child. Indirectly, the birth of her baby appears to have been interpreted as another act of violating the values and norms her respected father represented. As von Matt highlights, in family conflicts, it is often the younger generation's resistance to power or their failure to conform to the parents' norms which are interpreted as *unruly*. In order to pass as *reprobate* or *unruly*, it is a necessary pre-condition that the characteristic deviant moral behaviour is ascribed, both implicitly or explicitly, to a character, whether by the character himself or by others (von Matt 39). After all,

> [r]eprobate sons and unruly daughters can only exist where an actual character delivers this judgement reverting to an applicable law and drawing conclusions from doing so. The phenomenon of the reprobate child is necessarily linked to the act of judging and, thus, to an actual trial. The family is transformed into a tribunal. (39, my translation)[33]

At the time of the play, District Justice O'Donnell, no longer of sound mind or disposing memory, lives in a world of his own, a world of the past and of the court. Confusing his home with the courtroom, the former judge is aptly referred to by Roche as "a symbol of the Law" (*Theatre* 80). Repeatedly engaged in fictitious conversations with former defendants and "still delivering judgments from the bench, some of them on individual members of his own family," District Justice O'Donnell no longer recognises Judith, who now nurses him and who appears to have subjected herself entirely to the power manifestations and expectations of her father (Roche, *Theatre* 77). Putting the boy in an orphanage after birth, she returned to her father's house to fulfil her familial duties as O'Donnell's eldest daughter. Having, metaphorically speaking, been found guilty of treason in her father's tribunal and unable to appeal

[33] Original: [v]erkommene Söhne und missratene Töchter kann es nur geben, wo eine lebendige Person im Rückgriff auf ein geltendes Gesetz dieses Urteil fällt und daraus Konsequenzen zieht. Das Phänomen des missratenen Kindes ist zwingend gekoppelt an das Ereignis des Urteils und damit an ein Gerichtsgeschehen. Die Familie wird zum Tribunal. (39)

to any court as the father rules the family with absolute power, Judith submits herself to the judge's strict and, with regard to her child, inhumane principles. Possibly feeling responsible for the stroke her father suffered when she neglected her duties and for the disgrace he must have endured by the birth of her illegitimate child, Judith, freezing her own set of beliefs, her needs as well as those of her own child, fights a losing battle to keep her somewhat dysfunctional family and the dilapidating house together. After her father's death, she informs the rest of the family how she failed to "get an overdraft from the bank" after a storm "lifted the whole roof off the back" (*Aristocrats* 317). Furthermore, apart from nursing her demented father, she has spent the last seven years caring for her mute uncle, who drank himself "half-crazy" as a "young fella" and then suddenly "stopped speaking" (254), and minding her youngest sister Claire, who is, according to her siblings, inflicted with "depression" and "over-anxiety" (268 and 269). Despite Judith's courageous fight, her father has not forgotten the public disgrace he was exposed to because of his eldest child. Thus, although Judith's motherhood does not appear to be discussed openly in the family, the District Justice has never forgiven his daughter for causing this crisis. Mentally disturbed and no longer able to repress his private thoughts, he "confidentially" divulges the family secret to his nurse, Judith, and – unaware of the intercom that has been installed in the house – to anyone present in Ballybeg Hall:

> FATHER. Let me tell you something in confidence: Judith betrayed the family.
> JUDITH. Did she?
> FATHER. I don't wish to make an issue of it. But I can tell you confidentially – Judith betrayed us. […] Great betrayal; enormous betrayal. (257)

In his eyes, his eldest daughter is guilty of violating the (unwritten) laws of the family. The family tribunal and the aspect of moral judgement, which von Matt discusses in his study, are hinted at in *Aristocrats* when O'Donnell mentions Judith's sister: "Anna's praying for Judith. Did you know that? […] Anna has the whole convent praying for her" (*Aristocrats* 257). O'Donnell's comment, addressed to Judith as his nurse rather than his daughter, illustrates that, contrary to Judith, who has brought shame on the family, Anna, who works as a nun in Zambia, has seemingly become her father's sole pride and comfort.

In his reading of *Aristocrats*, Andrews characterises Judith as the member of the family for whom "the old order is simply not worth preserving" (*Art* 155). As my interpretation of the play has shown, I agree with this view – but only with reservations. Bonding with the civil rights movement, Judith might have defied the system of her father, but after giving birth to her child, Judith abandoned the baby. In fact, she spent seven years nursing three members of

the family, ensuring that the old order was kept alive. In addition, it was she who invited the American academic Tom Hoffnung to chronicle the family history, which shows that Judith – regardless of her own attitude or ideas – respects her father's pride in tradition and acts accordingly. Nevertheless, and this is why I still agree with Andrews' claim, after her father's death she allows the old system to dissolve. District Justice O'Donnell's death thus marks, as Eamon suggests, "'the end of an epoch,'" the end of the family's entanglement with Ballybeg and the legal profession (*Aristocrats* 312). Along the line of von Matt's argument that unruly children are frequently representatives of a new age (69), O'Donnell's demise also symbolises the beginning of a new era in which Judith will live according to her own convictions and at the beginning of which she announces that "[t]he first thing I am going to do is take the baby out of the orphanage" to undo the mistakes which her father's manifestations of power resulted in (*Aristocrats* 318). As McMullan stresses, not only does the death of the *pater familias* enable Judith to sell the house and reunite with her child, but it also has a liberating effect on other characters such as Uncle George, who "rediscovers his voice and decides to move to London with Alice and Eamon" (150). The fact that Uncle George regains his voice after District Justice O'Donnell has passed away indicates that the family succeeds in overcoming the state of inertia which they lapsed into as a result of his power and control.

Whereas in "Losers" and *Aristocrats* the manifestations of power and control are closely related to sound, in *Molly Sweeney*, the two male protagonists superimpose the power of sight on the blind female character. Vision or "the hegemony of the eye" are therefore the keywords for an understanding of *Molly Sweeney* (Jay 384). In the play, Molly is urged by her husband, Frank Sweeney, and the celebrated ophthalmologist, Doctor Rice, to undergo an operation to restore her eyesight. Referring to Mr Rice's motive as "venal and mundane," Higgins goes on to explain that just as "Grace [in *Faith Healer*] is one of Frank Hardy's fictions, Molly is one of Frank Sweeney's causes" (97). The two male protagonists, Frank Sweeney and Mr Rice, indeed, "[n]either recognizing nor valuing Molly's experience of the world, [...] interpret her difference as disadvantage. But more than that, they attempt to turn her supposed disadvantage to their own advantage" (Harris 64). After importing Iranian goats and trying to make a living in the cheese business, Frank's latest project is Molly's operation. Frank keeps a considerable folder, entitled "*Researched and Compiled by Frank C. Sweeney*," which contains some of Molly's test results, pictures of their honeymoon and an article on "miraculous ophthalmological techniques once practised in Tibet [...] or Mongolia" (*Molly* 17, original emphasis). Publicly considered less successful than his wife, Frank dreams of a new beginning for both of them and of sensational

newspaper headlines, such as "*Miracle of Molly Sweeney. Gift of sight restored to middle-aged woman. 'I've been given a new world,' says Mrs Sweeney. Unemployed husband cries openly*" (26, original emphasis). Yearning for public recognition, Frank, who was originally attracted by Molly's otherness, is captivated by the idea of gaining a powerful position in his wife's new life. Whereas Molly senses that her former life and knowledge will be partly worthless after the operation as she will have to learn how to translate her "tactile engrams" into "the world of sight," he relishes the idea of her depending on him (20 and 21). He would be in a position similar to when he started courting her and went dancing with Molly, telling her to trust him: "I am your eyes, your ears, your location, your sense of space" (36).[34] Hence, from Frank's point of view, the experiment of restoring Molly's eyesight cannot possibly fail, for he can only gain and "[s]he has nothing to lose, has she? What has she to lose? – Nothing! Nothing!" (17) Doctor Rice, on the other hand, is aware of Frank's egoistic considerations and his false conclusion. The doctor even admits that Molly, whose "calm" and "independence" he liked, does not really need the operation and that – strictly speaking – it is Frank and he himself who can benefit from the situation (16). Nevertheless, inasmuch as his career is concerned, he is tempted to perform the operation: "[P]erhaps up here in remote Ballybeg was I about to be given – what is the vulgar parlance? – the chance of a lifetime, the one-in-a-thousand opportunity that can rescue a career" (18). Repressing his severe personal doubts, Doctor Rice's reasons are no more honourable than Frank's. He tries to convince himself that, although Molly does not need the operation, there is indeed nothing Molly can lose (28). Selfishly, Frank and Rice come to agree that sight is a blessing. They force their decision on Molly. The fact that the others appear to adhere to Berkeley's *esse est percipi* underlines once more that they do not treasure Molly's experience since – as Benn and Gaus argue in their sociological study – they have no access to her world (7). Unaware of what it is like to be blind, Frank and Doctor Rice think that Molly can only gain, which implies their arrogant conviction that the view of the majority is also the best view and that whoever deviates from the norm is at a disadvantage. Molly's

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[34] *Molly Sweeney* serves as a good example of a play which undermines the normative view of the powerful. The play suggests that as long as Molly is blind, she is able to pursue an independent life. However, after the operation, when she is no longer regarded as handicapped, she has to rely on other people to orient herself. In the daily lessons during which Frank puts different objects in front of her, he asks her to "build up a repertory of visual engrams" without touching anything (*Molly* 49). This can be interpreted as a cruel way of manifesting his power and knowledge over her. In her monologue, Molly describes how Frank used to test her on "knives and forks, or shoes and slippers, or all the bits and pieces on the mantelpiece for maybe another hour or more. Every night. Seven nights a week" (49). It appears to be a sign of kindness and an extreme form of naivety or repression when the female protagonist concludes that "Oh, yes, Frank couldn't have been kinder to me" at the time (49).

personal feelings or her point of view are not considered as the others are completely fail to perceive her perspective; as a result of her disability, her judgement is simply thought to be limited.

Looking back, Molly, who has been blind since childhood, confesses that before the operation she never actually thought of her world as "deprived" (*Molly* 24). Used to compensating her missing eyesight with imagination and fantasy, she felt unique and blessed, as "[t]he others kept asking me what the idea of colour meant to me, or the idea of space, or the notion of distance" (23). Molly is, therefore, content with her private world and her life as a successful physiotherapist; in addition to having learnt to swim and to cycle, she also knows how to distinguish between the different flowers in the garden by touch and smell. Convinced that she should be envied by everyone else, she cannot understand how people think she ought to be unhappy (24). Terrified of the future, Molly criticises the condescending attitude of those around her. Although Molly suddenly realises that the operation does not reflect her needs and wishes, "she submits, and cannot survive the ensuing dislocation. Initially presented as self-possessed, independent and highly resourceful, her integrity is destroyed by instrumental masculine authority" (McMullan 145). When Molly understands to what extent she is being abused and exploited it is too late:

> Why am I going for this operation? None of this is my choosing. Then why is this happening to me? I am being used. Of course I trust Frank. Of course I trust Mr Rice. But how can they know what they are taking away from me? How do they know what they are offering me? They don't. They can't. And have I anything to gain? Anything? Anything?
> And then I knew, suddenly I knew why I was so desolate. It was the dread of exile, of being sent away. It was the desolation of homesickness. (*Molly* 31)

Throughout her life, Molly's blindness has provided her with a private space that was hers exclusively and that offered her security and shelter. The impending operation is frightening for her. She suddenly becomes conscious of the operation signifying a loss for her. She knows that she will have to let go the private and familiar space she has loved. Even before the bandages are removed after the operation, Molly is exposed to a new standard of public expectations and obligations. Bewildered, Molly discovers the superficial interests of the public world. The nurse, for instance, spends half an hour preparing her for Doctor Rice's visit and suggests that "[y]ou'll find that from now on – if everything goes well of course – you'll find that you'll become very aware of your appearance" (*Molly* 40). Despite feeling like a schoolgirl who is "dressed up for the annual excursion," she does not want to disappoint Frank and Doctor Rice (41). Indeed, the ophthalmologist is delighted with the

outcome of the operation. From a medical point of view, Molly's eyesight is restored. Most importantly, however, after seven years of darkness in his own life, Doctor Rice feels newly equipped with godlike qualities as a famous eye-surgeon and somewhat rehabilitated as his formerly shattered self-concept has temporarily been healed and made whole again:

> [...] suddenly, miraculously all the gifts, all the gifts were mine again, abundantly mine, joyously mine; and on that blustery October morning I had such a feeling of mastery and – how can I put it? – such a sense of playfulness for God's sake that I knew I was restored. [...] Yes, I'll remember Ballybeg. [...] The place where I restored her sight to Molly Sweeney. Where the terrible darkness lifted. Where the shaft of light glanced off me again. (48)

Initially, Molly shares Mr Rice's excitement, but the new world is also "foreign," "disquieting" and "alarming" (50). Overwhelmed by all the sensual stimuli, she does not know how to cope with the new situation. Her enthusiasm soon fades; she ends up "living on a borderline between fantasy and reality" (58). At this stage, neither the public nor her former private world are available to her: she has lost everything. She slowly drifts into a mental realm where other people can no longer reach her, while Frank and Mr Rice "having failed, [...] both move on to other enthusiasms and other posts" (Harris 64). Molly's new mental realm is thus a place of loneliness and isolation, insecurity and exile constituting a sharp contrast to the private world she inhabited before, which offered her a strong sense of security, homeliness and belonging.

As *Molly Sweeney* questions the significance that vision has in modern society, the play recalls Foucault and Debord, who discussed "the ocularcentrism of those who praised the 'nobility of sight'" (Jay 384). Deviating forms of sensual perception (such as smell or sound) are not fully accepted; the power of the norm, in this case the power of sight, is seen to question or even destroy the otherness of the minority who do not share this norm. After all, alternative points of view threaten the majority who are in a position of power. Harris correctly points out that "[t]rusting the men in her life [...] Molly relinquishes her pleasure, her independence, her unique mastery of her surroundings. She trusts and ceases to exist" (64). Frank and Doctor Rice, "looking for a miracle and [...] blind to the potential shortcomings of how the cure might negatively affect her," abuse Molly's confidence (Roche, *Theatre* 195). In pursuit of their interests to regain control and authority, the two male figures do not care about Molly's personal experience. As Frank and Mr Rice are convinced that life of sighted people is more valuable than that of blind people because it represents the norm, they are shown to manifest their power and control when they decide what is desirable and good for Molly, quite regardless of her

circumstances and perspective of the matter. In effect, the loss of independence and control over her life is the price Molly pays for her restored eyesight, which she did not want and enjoys only for a short time.

Whereas the power distribution in *Molly Sweeney* is shifted towards Frank and Mr Rice after Molly's operation and whereas this change indicates that Molly's private truth and experience is considered less valuable than the one of the two male characters who represent the norm in society, Friel's play *The Home Place* illustrates what impact the radical transformation of a long established power balance has on different members or groups of a society. Set in Ballybeg in the summer of 1878, "the inaugurating year of the Land War," just before Parnell's rise and his fight for *Home Rule*, Friel's only play which deals with the Protestant Big House in Irish history is characterised by an atmosphere of civil unrest, anxiety, violence, change and betrayal (O'Brien, "The Late Plays" 100).[35]

At the heart of the action, there are two families, each represented by three characters on stage, namely the father, his son or daughter and a cousin. The Gores represent the British landlords in Ireland, referred to by the locals as "the Lodgers" indicating that, even centuries after first moving to this part of the country, the family have not assimilated into the local community and are therefore not fully integrated in Ballybeg (*Home* 26). In the play, Christopher Gore, the widowed head of the family, and his son David are visited by Christopher's cousin Richard, "*a bachelor in his sixties*" and "*[a] man of resolute habits and Victorian confidence*" (28). On their way to the Aran Islands, Richard, a passionate ethnologist, anthropologist and anthropometrist from the family's home place in Kent, and his personal assistant Perkins are spending a few days in Ballybeg. In the west of Ireland, they intend to further research Richard's theory that behind a tribe's physical portrait, for instance, "beneath that exquisite Celtic appearance, there is a psychological portrait" to be drawn of ethnic groups such as the Aran people (20–21). Searching for a means of knowing a tribe's intelligence, stupidity, cunning, ambition and faithfulness by the look and the genetics of its members, Richard tells David that he dreams of

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35 The term *Home Rule* is used to refer to "[t]he aspiration to self-government that characterized constitutional Nationalists from 1870 to 1918" ("Home Rule" 374). The "countywide campaign against landlordism" (Comerford, "Land League" 310) aimed at gaining local control over internal affairs, while according to the architects of the movement "foreign affairs, armed forces, currency and majority taxation were to remain with the Westminster Parliament" ("Home Rule" 374). After the foundation of the Land League in 1879, "agrarian disturbance and conflict" ("Land War" 452) arose among the different parties, namely the landlords, the authorities and tenants, culminating in "the social ostracization to which Captain Boycott and numerous others were subjected" and in "violent actions not officially approved by the Land League" and its president Charles Stewart Parnell (Comerford, "Land War" 314).

codifying "the 'primeval' natives" (Higgins 109). He proudly announces that decoding the local tribes would provide the British colonisers with absolute power: "[I]magine how different our history would be if treason like that [i. e. the 1798 Rebellion in Ireland] could be anticipated" (*Home* 35).[36]

The second set of characters in *The Home Place* represent the locals in Ballybeg and those rebellious Irish forces Richard aims at codifying and categorising: the O'Donnell/Doherty family. However, contrary to Richard's generalising categorisation of the Irish "breed," the three representatives' aspirations and beliefs at the outset of the Irish Land Wars are shown to greatly differ (35). Exploring the three native Irish characters' attitudes towards and their involvement in the outbreak of the socio-political conflict between the locals and the planters in *The Home Place*, the play lays open what the three local representatives think of the power distribution between the Protestant and the Catholic inhabitants in colonial Ballybeg. Clement O'Donnell, for instance, is a teacher who has always approached the Gore family with awe and respect, indicating that he has always accepted their status and their crucial role within Ballybeg community. Although the audience is informed at an early stage that Clement is an alcoholic whom Richard Gore calls a "grotesque" and a "buffoon," he is at the same time admired by a number of characters in the play for successfully conducting the school choir in Ballybeg (42). His daughter Margaret, who has been employed as a housemaid by the Gore family since she was fourteen, has, according to her father, "cut herself off from her home and her people" (40). The notion of Margaret's estrangement from the locals is further intensified when the audience learns that both Christopher and David wish to marry her. While Richard, therefore, ironically describes Margaret as the Lodge's "chatelaine" (21), the locals treat her like a "class traitor" suggesting that having adopted the Gore family's socio-political views she "exemplifies [a] facet of peasant subalternity, that which denies its own identity" (Boltwood 211). Margaret's cousin Con Doherty, one of the leaders of the civil unrest and one of the reasons for the settlers' anxiety, complements the trio of the local family. For Margaret, Con is simply a "wastrel" who spends his time "going around whispering defiance into the ears of stupid young

[36] The "insurrection of 1798" is used to describe "the culmination of the revolutionary activities of the United Irishmen" (Coakley 260). The Society of United Irishmen was founded in Belfast and Dublin in 1791. "The society's ideology combined the new radicalism inspired by the American and French Revolutions with the older traditions of British advanced Whig or commonwealth doctrine, and Irish patriotism" (Connolly, "United Irishmen" 567). These rebels' "main aims were parliamentary reform and the removal of English control of Irish affairs" (567). The different attempts at rising and the outbreaks of violence, which lasted for several months, were, however, defeated and as a result "some 1,500 persons were executed, transported or flogged. […] Overall the rebellion, involving an estimated 30,000 deaths, represents the most violent episode in Irish history since the 17th century" (Coakley 261).

fools" (*Home* 16). Claiming that "it would fit him better to do a decent day's work," she adds that "[w]hatever ugly activity he's involved in, we want none of it here [i.e. in the Lodge]" (16). Despising people like Con who embody "a confident proto-nationalism capable of calmly defying Victorian landlords who assume their innate superiority" (Boltwood 210), Margaret "forcefully dissociates herself" from her cousin, his ideologies or the "socio-political structure" which he "believes himself to represent" (O'Brien, "The Late Plays" 99). Related to Clement and Margaret, but adhering to much more radical ideologies and convictions, Con obtains a position similar to Richard Gore's in the planters' household. In fact, in the course of the action, the manifestations of power and the confrontations of these two characters reveal that they not only function as the main antagonists in the play but also represent two mutually exclusive world views.

As indicated above, Richard Gore, deeply intrigued by Social Darwinism, is convinced that if the British managed to "break into [the] vault" of deciphering a tribe or a racial community's ethnic code, they "wouldn't control just an empire" but "the entire universe" (*Home* 36). Exhibiting this type of hegemonial power, which O'Brien defines as an authority derived from "the unrestrained energies of imperial desire" and which expresses itself "in bullying and humiliation" as it denies a tribe its private truth, Richard decides to test his scientific research on volunteers from the local community in Ballybeg ("The Late Plays" 99). In his "imperial condescension and brutish assumption of racial superiority," he begins to take the local characters' measurements in order to explore their Irish mind and establish a link between the locals' ethnography and their ethno-psychology (Higgins 109). Richard's "measuring business," which Christopher naively describes as "a perfectly innocuous survey," is, however, interpreted by Con and the "three men down at the foot of the avenue" as a ruthless act of debasement to justify the dominion of British authority over the native Irish *other* (*Home* 55 and 57).

Stressing the settlers' power and control over the Irish local inhabitants in his experiment, Richard further exacerbates the volatile situation of the British landlords. In fact, before Richard's survey, turmoil and unrest are only hinted at vaguely. At the beginning of the play, Christopher and David actually return from attending a memorial service for Lord Lifford, a landlord who was murdered as he intended "to oversee the eviction of one of his tenants" (17). Unlike Margaret, who tries to convince Christopher that Lifford's death was "an isolated crime," Christopher, both "[f]rightened" and "terrified" by the recent events, wonders which landlord "is next on the list" (17). However, despite David's reservations about conducting Richard's anthropometrical experiment in this tense atmosphere where "everybody seems to be a bit [...] vigilant" or "on edge," Christopher argues that there is no reason to "object to

Richard's silly tabulations" (24). Thus, Christopher is completely unaware of the role surveillance plays in a colonial context. Referring to the crucial part surveillance plays in a colonial and imperial context, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin emphasise that

> [o]ne of the most powerful strategies of imperial dominance is that of surveillance, or observation, because it implies a viewer with an elevated vantage point, it suggests the power to process and understand that which is seen, and it objectifies and interpellates the colonized subject in a way that fixes its identity in relation to the surveyor. (*Key Concepts* 226, emphasis deleted)

Richard's act of measuring the local characters must be regarded as an extreme form of observation which actively exhibits and underlines the scientist's imperial superiority. In his study of *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, Lacan identifies the significance of the gaze in the development of a character's identity claiming that "the gaze that surprises me [i. e. the character who encounters his own split] and reduces me to shame [. . .] is, not a seen gaze, but a gaze imagined by me in the field of the Other" (84). Taking up Lacan's ideas, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin explain that, according to this line of thought, "the *imperial* gaze defines the identity of the subject, objectifies it within the identifying system of power relations and confirms its subalterneity and powerlessness" (*Key Concepts* 226, my emphasis). Mulvey also refers to Lacan's concept of the gaze in her essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" when she argues that gazing is never a neutral action. Distinguishing between an "active controlling" self and "an objectified other," Mulvey expresses her view that "[i]n a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure which is styled accordingly" (17 and 19). With regard to *The Home Place*, two of the three Irish volunteers whom Richard begins to examine for his "colonial taxonomy" are indeed female characters; the only exception is a character whom Higgins describes as "an outspoken urchin" (Higgins 109). However, apart from the gender distinction, Richard's act of gazing, in the colonial context in which Friel's play is set, additionally exemplifies a division between the coloniser/settler and the colonised/local. In preparation of his experiment with the local population, Richard exemplifies his method by codifying the looks of Sally, the second maid who works in the Gore household. Her powerlessness and inferiority as a female and colonised character "typical of the Celtic breed in Donegal" is crassly emphasised when Richard "*slaps her bottom in dismissal*" after the examination and tells her to go "[b]ack to the paddock" as if he were talking to an animal (*Home* 35). This scene recalls Frantz Fanon's description of his experiences with racial discrimination in situations in which he felt under

the scrutiny of white people's observing looks and which resulted in turning his own perception of himself into an experience with the *other*:

> I was responsible at the same time for my body, for my race, for my ancestors. I subjected myself to an objective examination, I discovered my blackness, my ethnic characteristics; and I was battered down by tom-toms, cannibalism, intellectual deficiency, fetichism, racial defects, slave-ships [...]. On that day, completely dislocated, unable to be abroad with the other, the white man, who unmercifully imprisoned me, I took myself far off from my own presence, far indeed, and made myself an object. What else could it be but an amputation, an excision, a hemorrhage that spattered my whole body with black blood? (112)

In Friel's play, Richard's gaze also provokes a counter-examination. Instead of interiorising the experience and identifying himself as inferior and *other*, as Fanon does, Con focuses the attention on the coloniser's imperial behaviour. Fiercely against Richard's "measuring business," which he finds "offensive" as it dehumanises and objectifies the local characters in a condescending manner and deprives them of their right to privacy and freedom, Con intimidates the landlord by reminding him of Lifford's fate (*Home* 57). His powerful appearance does not fail to have an impact on Christopher, who expels his cousin Richard from his estate. In doing so, the landlord betrays his own "caste" and roots (Roche, *Theatre* 55). In fact, the Gore family's fate resembles the doomed trees which David marks with white-wash so that they can be felled later. In the middle of this action, David tries to show his father a falcon; with the brush in his hand, he "*swings round excitedly to point to the bird*," but accidentally he "*splashes a large white-wash mark across Christopher's chest*," echoing the marks the two men used for those trees that should be felled (*Home* 73). The symbolic value of this scene indicates that by subjecting themselves to Con's dictate, Christopher and his son David are doomed. They pave the way for the Gore family's decline and, indirectly, foreshadow the historical rise of local characters such as Con Doherty during the civil unrests.

On a personal level, as Boltwood suggests, "Christopher's surrender to the peasants' bold defiance of aristocratic privilege shames him before his family and leads to his emotional collapse after Margaret rejects his marriage proposal" (204). In fact, Christopher's encounter with the local inhabitants – and their private viewpoints – unveils that he must be regarded as a prototypical British settler who is "displaced" from his own home place as he and his family have failed to establish a secure "identity in the new place" because "their own identity depends in part [...] on retaining their sense of difference from the 'native' population" (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, *Key Concepts* 211). Although the Gore family have lived in Ballybeg for generations and although Christopher recognises the faces of the local volunteers, he

cannot recall their names during the anthropometrical experiment. This instance demonstrates that "the 'home place' (family seat, origins) and 'home' (where one lives and feels at home) do not coincide in the play" and that both father and son "still have not penetrated into 'the private core' of the natives" (Bertha 160 and 161). Utterly unable to even begin to decode the local tribe, Christopher lacks their sense of belonging and is excluded from being a true member of their community. Thus, he is a planter and lodger with "[n]o home, no country, a life of isolation and resentment" who has "to be resilient" in order to fulfil his father's motto to "rise above" the local inhabitants and obtain the superior position of a coloniser (*Home* 68). Although he frequently stresses that he regards Ballybeg as his home, Christopher has, in fact, always remained alienated from the place and the Irish population. At the end of the play, he confesses to Margaret that the gulf between him and the Irish population is too great, as they "don't share a language" (67).

In a discussion of their respective wedding plans the night before the experiment and Con's appearance on the scene, Richard and Christopher both reveal the patronising and snobbish arrogance of the coloniser. Wondering whether Christopher "[w]ouldn't be inhibited about marrying down," Richard informs his cousin that "going native" means that "whatever is still Kentish in you will be extinguished" (30 and 33). Reassuring Richard, Christopher – possibly unintentionally – displays a similarly condescending colonial attitude: "Or perhaps the *very lucky* Irish woman will become a *little* Kentish" (33, my emphasis). Telling Margaret about this exchange the following day, Christopher refers to her being invited to Richard's wedding as "a big gesture" (21). This phrase shows that, like his cousin Richard, Christopher has interiorised colonial beliefs and "is more closely affiliated with his English family heritage than would be expected" (Boltwood 205). In his opinion, as a colonial subject, Margaret lacks the necessary background and possibly the demeanour or manners to attend such an event (*Home* 21). To avoid feeling embarrassed or exposed to criticism as a result of her presence, Christopher further explains that he immediately declined the invitation suggesting they would be occupied with the harvest at this time of the year (21). Thus, whereas Richard actively aims at seizing power and control and does not understand why exhibiting colonial superiority could offend the local population, Christopher's case is subtler. In spite of his love for Ballybeg and its inhabitants, he has interiorised the way of thinking which is typical of his class. Therefore, more than just the language separates him from the local community.

Whereas Richard's and Con's manifestations of power in *The Home Place* differ from the other instances discussed in this chapter, Margaret's final sentence in the play links her to Judith's submission under her father's rule after giving birth to her illegitimate child in *Aristocrats*. Despite the fact that

throughout the play Margaret's utterances mirror the ideas expressed by the planters and despite the fact that she rejects her cousin Con's conduct and actions, I believe that Margaret's father wrongly accuses his daughter of having abandoned her roots in favour of the Gores' positions (*Home* 40). In fact, I agree with Bertha's reading of Margaret when she claims that the female protagonist "hesitates between the two worlds," and that Ballybeg House is "a liminal place, a place of 'exile'" for Margaret (160). After all, the school choir's performances of Thomas Moore's song *Oft in the Stilly Night* in the far distance, which frame the play, occurring at the beginning and at the end of it, have a remarkable effect on Margaret. Her demeanour shows, as Higgins notes, that she has only "seemingly" dissociated herself from her native background (108). In fact, according to the stage directions,

> *[t]he moment she becomes aware of the singing Margaret stands motionless, enraptured. Then she is drawn as if mesmerized to the edge of the lawn [. . .]. She stands there for two full verses, absorbing the music, listening with her whole being, now and then silently mouthing the words of the song.* (*Home* 11)

It is not only, as Higgins claims, "the ethereal sound of Clement O'Donnell's choir," providing "an insistent undermusic of loss and hope, drowned out by the exigencies of class and colonial hierarchies" (108), which leaves Margaret explicitly "enraptured," or literally speaking, "[r]apturously delighted," "entranced" or "ravished" (*OED* 275). Rather than being simply captivated by the sound or the message transported by Moore's song, Margaret, her father's "first born" and once his "prime chorister," is indeed captured by the power and control which her father exercises over her (*Home* 23). When Christopher mentions that he vividly remembers how Clement "presented [his daughter] very formally" to the Gore family, when the girl was fourteen, Margaret confesses that she was "terrified" at the time, underlining that her father's plans did not comply with her wishes and that she found herself in a heteronomous situation to which she subjected herself (23 and 22). Finally, when Christopher, "shattered" and "in total confusion," suffers a complete breakdown in the last scene and explains that he will not be "able to rise above any more," she counters his statement by declaring: "That's what we all do," implying that, contrary to Christopher's colonial belief that rising above the masses defines his class, it is a law of nature that people are forced to adapt to rules and circumstances different from their own desire (74). In fact, her last conversation with Christopher, in which she asks the landlord three times to listen and pay attention to her father's music, she unveils her private truth that, although she loves David and has repeatedly proved to have adopted the colonisers' convictions, both as daughter and chorister she is willing to submit herself to the command of her father and conductor: "Shhh. Just listen.

Because in a short time Father will *come up here for me*. Shhh" (75, my emphasis). Unlike Boltwood, who states that "even if we assume that in the future she marries into the Lodge, we must remember that within Friel's dramaturgy such an accomplishment is less than auspicious," I believe that Margaret's final utterance demonstrates that Clement is an opportunist who has been shown to oscillate between the landlord's former power and the recent attraction which Con's actions and Moore's lyrics – and their nationalist implications – have on him (212). As a result of the recent developments in Ballybeg, which have drastically altered the power distribution within the community, Clement has decided to take his daughter home and, in a patriarchal act, to submit her to his and the local Irish population's control again. Thereby, he forces his daughter, who is once more presented as completely passive and powerless, to "rise above" the imperial and colonial mind-set implemented on her as the Gore family's housekeeper (74). Hence, Margaret resembles the other characters presented in this section of my study who are either forced to sacrifice or willingly submit their personal desires, wishes or perspective to another, more powerful, character's will or order.

4. The Power of Language

In his introduction to *The Art of Brian Friel*, Andrews quotes Bakhtin, who identifies "language" as "a site of conflict where different social groupings struggle for power" (60). Bakhtin's view underlines that language is a means of manifesting and enacting power. Friel's plays, however, even exemplify Foucault's claim that "speech is no mere verbalisation of conflicts and systems of domination, but [...] the very object of man's conflicts" ("Discourse" 216). Not only does Friel's writing expose various mechanisms groups or individuals make use of to acquire a powerful position and impose their will on other people, but his plays also lay open the strategies which the unprivileged or powerless characters apply in order to evade these manifestations of power and engage in a battle over language and truth.

Those characters in Friel who do not feel at ease in the public realm either try to behave unobtrusively or withdraw into a mental sphere where they can live in a world of their own and where their behaviour and moral values are not questioned by anyone. Thus, the mental realm turns into the space where they do not have to deny their true identity. In this personal space, attempting to preserve their inner core, these characters begin to disclose their private truths to themselves or to the audience. Quintessentially, articulating their private perspective allows them to shape their own truth and reality.

On the other hand, the groups or characters in Friel's plays who have power over language and thus indirectly over truth always have at least one opponent who distrusts the assertion that they use language for the good of everyone and who suspects that they shape reality according to their perspective or their interests. In *The Freedom of the City*, the journalist and the judge both provide the public with misinformation and draw conclusions based on their limited and biased point of view. Witnessing what Lily, Skinner and Michael discuss inside the Guildhall, the audience realises that initially the judge's and the journalist's conclusions have nothing in common with reality. However, as mentioned above, regardless of the three demonstrators' private experiences, the journalist's statements are so powerful that they influence the military measures taken and create a new reality in the public space.

Whereas it is neither the journalist's nor the judge's intention in *The Freedom of the City* to use language to harm anyone or to deny a character his or her private truth, Fox Melarkey, the main protagonist and proprietor of an unsuccessful travelling show in *Crystal and Fox*, is perfectly aware of the fact that the struggle for language is at the same time a struggle for power. This linguistic manifestation of power helps Fox pursue his own interests, strengthen his position, and humiliate his family and fellow artists. At the end of a performance, Cid, a member of Fox's company, demands that he and his wife Tanya "take the last call" that same night so that they will receive the warmest applause (*Crystal* 16). Pretending to comply with Cid's request, Fox manifests his control over the company as well as over public space by deliberately asking the couple on stage before anyone else:

> FOX. Thank you, thank you, thank you. And now once more I'd ask you to show your appreciation of the top-rank artists who performed on these boards tonight. Ireland's best known and best loved man of mystery and suspense – El Cid and his beautiful assistant, Tanya!
> *He strikes a heralding chord. Thin clapping from the audience. Pause.*
> CID. Bastard!
> *Cid catches Tanya's hand and assuming a radiant smile he runs out.* (16–17)

Fox knows that Cid will interpret the order for the artists' appearance on stage as a symbol of his and Tanya's lack of esteem within the company. Although the couple do not show their anger publicly, they confront Fox after the show. Receiving no reaction from Fox, Cid announces that he and his wife will not accept this condescending treatment by their boss and will leave the company in the morning to work for Fox's rival Dick Prospect. As their group cannot afford to lose any more members, Fox's wife, Crystal, tries to make amends by begging her husband to apologise to the two artists. Fox, however, has no intention of keeping Cid and Tanya. In reality and contrary to what his wife

thinks, Fox's linguistic manifestation of power was well planned and amounts to having been his personal way of expelling Tanya and Cid.

Yearning for the past when he "was cycling out to make his fortune in the world with nothing but his accordion and his rickety wheel and his glib tongue," Fox secretly dreams of the day he first met Crystal, his "princess," who "had her hair tied up with a royal blue ribbon and a blue blouse, and a navy skirt" (24–25). Discontent with the company's circumstances and his position as its "affable, bantering entertainer" (Kenneally as quoted by Tallone 36), the male protagonist believes that "[h]is powers of invention are squandered" (McGuinness 20). In addition to glorifying the memories of the times when the company consisted only of Crystal and himself, Fox, as Tallone argues, "begins to dismantle his own show, a process which turns out to be an act of self-destruction" (36). In order to dispose of Pedro, the company's most senior artist and the family's most loyal friend, Fox poisons the artist's dog. Thus, Fox manages to overcome the last barrier which keeps him from materialising his vision of what Andrews refers to as "the lost Eden" with Crystal (*Art* 108). Admitting that, throughout her husband's period of restlessness, she "was terrified" that he was "going to shake [her] off too," Crystal confesses: "[…] I am rotten. Papa's dying in hospital. Gabriel [i. e. their son]'s going to jail. The show's finished. We've no money. And I am as happy as a lark" (*Crystal* 60). However, when Crystal promises to accompany her husband on his way to hell and back, Fox, "unable even to ask for the human warmth and connection he seeks," proves entirely unable to endure the sense of fulfilment and perfection which has finally been achieved between his wife and himself and which he has dreamed of for so long (Higgins 22). Wrecking "the one illusion he has left, the illusion of love," Fox once more makes use of the power of language to produce a false reality by telling his wife that he betrayed their son Gabriel to the police for financial reasons (Andrews, *Art* 109). Utterly horrified by her husband's revelation which she mistakes for reality, Crystal destroys the present harmony between the spouses by leaving him, no longer paying attention to Fox's attempt to remedy the situation: "Crystal! Crystal! (*Quietly, tensely*) It's a lie, Crystal, all a lie, my love, I made it all up, never entered my head until a few minutes ago and then I tried to stop myself but I couldn't" (*Crystal* 64). This instance between Crystal and Fox exemplifies a tragic element in Friel's plays: out of a deep necessity, Friel's characters, such as Fox, pursue their own dreams and try to reinvent the rare moments in the past in which they recall having been happy, entirely satisfied and free from sorrows. Whereas most of Friel's protagonists simply cherish their few memories of former happiness and are shown to be too afraid to truly try and fulfil their secret dreams, Fox's power of language allows him to return to the twosomeness which he has come to associate with bliss. However, the development of Crystal and Fox's relation-

ship painfully underlines that as soon as Fox has actually reached his goal, he is so utterly overwhelmed by and unable to endure and control the emotions which he has evoked that, out of the same inner necessity which made him fight for the reinvention of the past, he has to destroy the atmosphere of perfection and fulfilment between Crystal and himself. Hence, Friel's characters are imprisoned by their desires and dreams of happiness, which they utterly fail to enjoy in the rare cases in which they are reached.

Like *Crystal and Fox*, *Faith Healer* is another play epitomizing the role of language. In fact, Frank Hardy abuses his linguistic power to manipulate other people in a similar fashion to Fox Melarkey. Commenting on the strong resemblance in character between the two male figures in Friel's plays *Crystal and Fox* and *Faith Healer*, Tallone aptly refers to Fox and Frank as "magicians and masters of words" (58). However, despite the similarities between these two protagonists, Friel upgrades the position of the female character in *Faith Healer* by granting Grace a monologue to express her own perspective. Hence, Frank Hardy's linguistic power is not as uncontested as Fox Melarkey's. Although Frank regularly wields his control over language and truth to shape his wife's reality according to his ideas and wishes, the perfectly self-contained speech in which Grace verbalises her private experiences and expresses her view of the instances described in Frank's first monologue undercuts Frank's credibility and (linguistic) power. In fact, dissonance becomes a key characteristic of the play. Thus, as O'Brien notes, "[v]irtually every circumstance in the play is subject to different interpretations," after the audience has listened to both characters disclosing their private truths (*Friel* 98).

In the course of the four divergent monologues in *Faith Healer*, "the ugliest battles are fought over who exactly each character is" (DeVinney 113). This fact underlines Hall's claim that for human beings "language is the privileged medium" to "'make sense' of things, in which meaning is produced and exchanged" because meaning quintessentially provides people with a "sense of [their] own identity, of who [they] are and with whom [they] 'belong'" (1 and 3). One of the "significant discrepancies in the retelling of some of the principal events" in the couple's lives together can be found with regard to Grace's background (Grene, "*Faith Healer*" 53). Constantly changing his wife's origin and surname, Frank denies Grace's roots, nationality and, in general, her identity. As he contemplates his relationship with Grace, Frank describes his wife as his "mistress. A Yorkshire woman [...] Grace Dodsmith from Scarborough" or maybe "Knaresborough" thus unveiling to the audience that he cannot really remember where his wife was originally from (*Faith* 335). Indicating that in his opinion the significance of (place) names is overestimated, he expresses his conviction that since "they all sound so alike, it doesn't matter" (335). Moreover, he explains to the audience that Grace

"never asked for marriage and for all her tidiness I don't think she wanted marriage – her loyalty was adequate for her" (335). However, in her monologue Grace emphasises Frank's subtle and malicious use of language as well as his "talent for hurting" her (345). She reveals how distressed she used to be by his denial of her name and identity. After the couple had been married for seven years and shortly after she had "had a pleurisy and then two miscarriages in quick succession," Grace, unable to "endure the depravity of [their] lives any longer," decided to leave Frank (346–347). Having taken a bus to Omagh, Grace describes how she "walked the three miles out to Knockmoyle" to her parent's home (347). This discrepancy between the two accounts, in which Frank, a Dublin man, denies Grace's Irish heritage and insists on her British roots whereas Grace points to her Irish descent and background, highlights the "unreliability" of at least one of the two narrators (Grene, "*Faith Healer*" 53).

Corroborating the couple's marriage as well as Grace's Irish citizenship, Teddy, Frank's manager, considerably strengthens Grace's version of the past in his narrative and actually resolves some of the "divergences" in Frank's and Grace's accounts (53). Nevertheless, Teddy's reliability as narrator and his impartiality as neutral arbiter are likewise undermined because he has become too entangled with these two main characters over the years to be neutral. Instead of dealing with Frank and Grace according to his own principle of handling clients "on the basis of a relationship that is strictly business only," Teddy admits that Grace is "this terrific woman that of course I love very much" and who is "married to this man that I love very much – love maybe even more" (*Faith* 357 and 368).

Still, regardless of Teddy's involvement in Frank and Grace's life and relationship, Grene concludes that, based on the large number of parallels between the two narratives, the audience is "bound to reach the conclusion that Grace and Teddy are telling the truth" ("*Faith Healer*" 55). According to this reading, Frank then becomes what Tallone describes as "a manipulator of [his own and other people's] identities" (52). Therefore, Teddy's report illustrates that there is no reason to believe that Grace's state of mind at the time of her speech is so distraught that she lives in a world of fantasy in which she invents her Irish heritage. Frank's credibility, in contrast, is seriously called into question. Of course, one possible reason that his report clashes with the other characters' narratives is that the conflicting matters are of minor importance to Frank, who is portrayed as someone whose fragmented and troubled sense of himself results in a strong self-centredness that absorbs most of the main protagonist's energy and thinking. However, reflecting on Frank's motives for regularly using the power of language to change his wife's background and her surname, Grace takes a rather different approach to her husband's conduct. In

fact, she believes that Frank's behaviour was "[o]ne of his mean tricks [...] to humiliate" her (*Faith* 345). Interpreting her husband's demeanour as an attempt to degrade and crush her sense of identity also means that Grace contradicts Frank's claim that "her loyalty" was perfectly satisfying or "adequate" for her (335). Talking about their marital status, she further mentions how hurt she used to feel when Frank pretended that they "weren't married – I was his mistress – always that – that was the one constant: 'You haven't met Gracie McClure, have you? She's my mistress,' knowing so well that that would wound me and it always did" (345). I would argue that the "atrophying terror" and the "maddening questions" which Frank admits define his daily life keep him from answering his desire to establish a stable and healthy self-concept (376). His strong urge "to adjust, to refashion, to recreate everything around him," which Grace refers to as "some compulsion," appears to provide Frank with the sense of power which he needs in order to feel capable of mastering life (345). Moreover, I agree with Tallone, who highlights that, "inventing new names and new identities for Grace [...] including the role of somebody he has cured," allows Frank to destabilise his wife's sense of identity and security, quintessentially leaving her as fragmented as he feels himself (52). Emphasising that "in telling stories about ourselves we are endeavouring to make sense of experience by putting together the often disjointed and fragmented pieces of everyday life," Woodward underlines the significance of "some kind of structure" in forming one's identity (28–29). By regularly undermining Grace's roots, her nationality and her name, Frank questions some of the key characteristics of her identity. At the same time, pretending to have saved Grace's life enables Frank to enhance his status in the eyes of the public who do not have access to her truth and to increase his wife's dependence on him. Suggesting that Grace owes her life to him and should therefore be grateful to him, Frank gains some linguistic and moral power over his wife.

However, confessing that his healing powers were a talent and an art he never fully understood or had control over, Frank shows that contrary to Grace, whom he boasts to have healed while they were travelling through Scotland and Wales, his performance in most cases consisted of depriving patients of their money (336). Frank seems convinced that exploiting his customers was so easy because

> they knew in their hearts they had come not to be cured but for confirmation that they were incurable; not in hope but for the elimination of hope; for the removal of that final, impossible chance – that's why they came – to seal their anguish, for the content of a finality. (336–337)

Frank believes that his patients did not really have confidence in his spiritual or healing powers, but trusted his linguistic power to publicly acknowledge the

incurability of their disease. Since Frank always found it intriguing and fulfilling to create a public reality by declaring the truth of his patients' terminal illness, he was able to influence people's private lives. Nonetheless, the few moments when he successfully healed people offered him a sense of achievement and allowed him to experience a short moment of coherence and unity

> because the questions that undermined my life then became meaningless and because I knew that for those few hours I had become whole in myself, and perfect in myself, and in a manner of speaking, an aristocrat, if the term doesn't offend you. (333)

Frank's statement demonstrates that – just as Grace's roots and well-being – the patients' true state of health clearly is of subsidiary interest to him. Seeking to "[satisfy] a demand for some degree of stability and of security," Frank is primarily concerned with his own troubled *self* in his engagement with other people (Woodward, xi). On the occasions when his faith healing powers work, his inferiority complex is temporarily suspended and his fragmented *self* suddenly becomes "whole" and "perfect" (*Faith* 333). Feeling equipped with godlike qualities at such moments, Frank happily receives his patients' gratitude as well as their "love, affection, respect," none of which he can offer himself (372).

Despite Frank's impression that he linguistically controls or even brings about reality, the absence of communication or interaction is just as significant a characteristic in *Faith Healer*. In fact, the three protagonists' relationship is marked by non-communication and silence. As Frank and Grace are unable to share their feelings or emotions by communicating their memories, their accounts of the past overlap only marginally. In her study on identity-forming processes, Woodward states that "[i]dentity provides links between the personal and the social, self and society, the psychic and the social" (xii). In his essay on language and translation in Brian Friel's plays, Welch notes that, failing to compare their personal sensations or views with one another, the characters' "[n]arration is unstable" because their "language and memory distort" (143). Consequently, the degree of privateness or intimacy shared between the Hardys is limited. Instead of achieving some congruence over the incidents they experience together, their perceptions and private worlds differ fundamentally. Frank and Grace's lack of communication keeps the couple from building a bridge between "the personal and the social" and from establishing some common ground between their separate selves (Woodward xii). In *Faith Healer* the missing "psycho-social" exchange, in which a character's understanding of the *self* is linked to the view of the *other*, results in the three characters' strong uncertainty with regard to their identities

(Woodward vii). Hence, their relationship is primarily defined by fragmentation, loneliness and a troubled notion of the *self*. Regardless of the fact that both Frank and Grace constantly express their beliefs and convictions as to why their partner behaved in a particular manner in the past, they never actually have these assumptions confirmed by their spouse. Consequently, forced to interpret the other character's past utterances and to contemplate the reasons for his or her actions, Frank and Grace do not succeed in creating a sense of coherence, understanding, warmth and bonding in their marriage.

Grace's greatest and most private sorrow is the loss of her baby two miles outside a place called Kinlochbervie (*Faith* 344). According to her recollections of the incident, Frank said a few pseudo-prayers at the child's burial but never mentioned the child again afterwards. Her husband's silence is a punishment for Grace, who regrets that

> there is no record of any kind. And he never talked about it afterwards; never once mentioned it again; and because he didn't, neither did I. So that was it. Over and done with. A finished thing. Yes. But I think it's a nice name, Kinlochbervie – a complete sound – a name you wouldn't forget easily…. (345)

Although her monologue clearly indicates that Grace feels that Frank imposes the power of silence on her in this context, she does not dare to openly discuss and share her private grief with her husband. However, remembering the place name of the village is central for Grace. As this name is the only concrete element she can hold on to, Kinlochbervie assures her of the reality of the birth and the brief existence of her infant child, who died even before being given a name and an identity of his own. Referring to the same situation, Teddy claims that, contrary to Grace's memories, it was he, not Frank, who dug the hole to bury the baby boy, mumbled a few words of prayer for the child and finally built a cross to place it on top of the infant's grave. In Teddy's account of that day Frank is given the role of a "bastard" who escaped to go for a drink the night Grace gave birth (363). In a somewhat soothing tone, Teddy then admits that it was only when Frank came back "[s]ober as a judge, all spruced up" in the evening that he realised that Frank's flight was not the "deliberate" and "bloody-minded" act he had suspected but a sign of his utter helplessness and distress (364 and 363). Recognising that in reality Frank is not the reckless and complacent character he attempts to convince the public of, Teddy lays bare the faith healer's sensitive and vulnerable inner self, which Frank himself never dares acknowledge openly:

> […] even though the old chatter never faltered for a minute, whatever way he kept talking straight into my face, I knew too that – oh, I don't know how to put it – but I got this feeling that in a kind of way – being the kind of man he was – well somehow I

> got the feeling, I *knew* that he *had* to keep talking because he had suffered all that she had suffered and that now he was … about to collapse. (365, original emphasis)

Unlike Grace, who takes Frank's silence personally and believes that her husband's carelessness primarily enables him to hurt her and exercise power over her, Teddy reveals his insight into Frank's private truth: in order to cope with his inner turmoil, Frank is forced to repress his emotions and desperation because these sensations are too painful to articulate or to even bear.

Completely unaware of what his wife and manager have told the audience in their monologues, Frank himself offers an example of the superficial recklessness and impudence of his personality of which he tries to convince the public. Misconstruing the actual incidents in Kinlochbervie and pretending that Grace's stillbirth never occurred, he talks about his dreams of having a son and, thereby, invents his own version of reality:

> I would have liked to have had a child. But she [i. e. Grace] was barren. And anyhow the life we led wouldn't have been suitable. And he [i. e. the baby boy] might have had the gift. And he might have handled it better than I did. I wouldn't have asked for anything from him – love, affection, respect – nothing like that. But I would have got pleasure just in looking at him. Yes. A child would have been something. (372)

Frank's statement underlines his utter inability to handle pain or loss. Omitting all the negative experiences of his life, he tries to linguistically construct a private world of illusions based on semi-truths. If the audience were not given Grace's and Teddy's views, his public statements might well be taken for real and would not evoke disbelief.

After her husband's death, the doctor asks Grace about Frank's profession. For the first time, she draws on the same power of language that used to excite Frank whenever he was given the opportunity to shape reality:

> 'He was an artist,' I said – quickly – casually – but with complete conviction – just the way he might have said it. Wasn't that curious? Because the thought had never occurred to me before. And then because I said it and the doctor wrote it down, I knew it was true …. (346)

Although she had formerly suffered from Frank's power over language, she now adopts his practice of inventing reality. As Grace's statement is his only source of information, the doctor does not question Frank's occupation and takes Grace's answer for fact. Highlighting the "predominance of storytelling [in Friel's writing] and the fore-grounding of narration in all its reliable and unreliable modes," Higgins argues that plays such as *Faith Healer* and *Making History*, indeed, "question the nature of language itself as a tool of communication" (53). Moreover, the critic stresses the playwright's tendency to ask

his audience "not just to adjudicate between versions of the 'truth,' but to recognize the implausibility of truth as an absolute concept" (53).

Although Friel's plays are marked by "a profound distrust of language" in general, the delicate role of language in representing absolute truth is made most explicit in *Making History* (Welch 145). In this play, the historical figure Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone, who fought for Irish independence in the sixteenth century, is turned into a fictional character. Using "some actual and some imagined events in the life of Hugh O'Neill," Friel emphasises Hugh O'Neill's domestic life, his personality and his convictions in *Making History* ("Programme Note" 135). The playwright explains that whenever a tension arose in the writing process "between historical 'fact' and the imperative of the fiction," he "kept faith with the narrative" (135).

Whereas Friel, therefore, chose to favour fiction over fact on the plot level, his main protagonist, Hugh, is someone who is particularly conscious of the danger of linguistic *mis*representation and thus of fictionalising and distorting reality. When Harry, Hugh's private secretary, informs him that Archbishop Peter Lombard has started gathering material in order to publish Hugh's biography, the Earl of Tyrone is rather alarmed. His distrust is further increased when the cleric declares that Hugh's "birth, education and personal attributes" are suitable elements in portraying Hugh O'Neill as "the natural leader" of the Irish revolt taking place at the beginning of the play (*History* 256). Hugh's unease is based on his knowledge that, as Bakhtin argued, meaning is fundamentally dialogic as any discourse is "always only partially understood, always an unequal exchange" (as quoted by Hall 4). After all,

> language [...] lies on the borderline between oneself and the other. The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes 'one's own' only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. Prior to this moment of appropriation, the word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language [...], but rather it exists in other people's mouths, in other people's contexts, serving other people's intentions: it is from there that one must take the word, and make it one's own. (Bakhtin 293–294)

Aware that history is in this context a struggle over meaning and presentation and that the public tend to mistake written words for absolute truth, Hugh begs Lombard to be perfectly truthful if he insists on publishing a book on his life. Having experienced heteronomy and stereotyping at a young age, Hugh is concerned about authenticity and truth. Partly brought up by Sir Henry Sidney and Lady Mary in England, he actually felt closer to them than to O'Hagan, who fostered him. Nevertheless, the night before he returned to Ireland, Sir Henry jokingly asked Hugh to comment on a quote which he

received from his friend Andrew Trollope, which states that "[t]hose Irishmen who live like subjects play but as the fox which when you have him on a chain will seem tame; but if he ever gets loose, he will be wild again" (*History* 293). Recalling this incident, Sir Henry's "trivial little hurt, that single failure in years of courtesy," which "pulsed in a corner of [Hugh's] heart" for years and provided him with a personal reason for fighting British colonial power in Ireland publicly, Hugh aims for absolute truth hoping that this will prevent him from being exposed to any further stereotypes and myths which completely fail to capture his personality and have nothing to do with his life (293).

Adopting a postmodern and poststructuralist viewpoint, Archbishop Lombard, on the other hand, dismisses the concept of absolute truth as a myth. Clarifying that truth will not necessarily be "a primary ingredient" in his tale, he professes that "the life of Hugh O'Neill can be told in many different ways. And those ways are determined by the needs and the demands and the expectations of different people and different eras" (257 and 267). Hence, with a number of options at his disposal, the Archbishop tells Hugh that he has decided to concentrate primarily on the literary quality of his storytelling rather than on authenticity and truthfulness:

> I'm no historian, Hugh. I'm not even sure I know what a historian's function is – not to talk of his method. [...] If you're asking me will my story be as accurate as possible – of course it will. But are truth and falsity the proper criteria? I don't know. Maybe when the time comes my first responsibility will be to tell the best possible narrative. Isn't that what history is, a kind of story-telling? [...] Imposing a pattern on events that were mostly casual and haphazard and shaping them into a narrative that is logical and interesting. [...] Maybe when the time comes, imagination will be as important as information. (257)

Adopting a traditional and empirical standpoint, Hugh fundamentally disagrees with Lombard's poststructuralist and postmodern understanding of history. Emmert argues that "[w]hereas in Peter Lombard's historiography the opposition of truth and fiction is deconstructed, Hugh O'Neill is a character who wants to uphold these categories" (198, my translation).[37] Asking the Archbishop to present reality and the true facts rather than to shape or tell a good story, Hugh is convinced that imagination and personal interests should be eliminated in a recording of history. Suspecting that Lombard will sacrifice truth and alter reality, Hugh mistrusts the Archbishop's "hagiography" of transforming one of his greatest defeats in the course of the conflict with the

[37] Original: [w]ährend in der Geschichtsschreibung des Peter Lombard die Opposition von Wahrheit und Fiktion dekonstruiert wird, probt die Figur des Hugh O'Neill die Aufrechterhaltung dieser Kategorien (198).

British into an achievement (McGrath 224 and Corbett 12). Regardless of Hugh's reservations and fears that Lombard is "going to embalm [him] in – in – in a florid lie," Lombard has decided to offer Gaelic Ireland a narrative that centres round the theme of "Hugh O'Neill as a national hero" (*History* 329 and 334–335). Endeavouring to turn the war for Irish independence into a holy crusade, Lombard explains: "You [i. e. Hugh] lost a battle – that has to be said. But the telling of it can still be a triumph" (332). Lombard's plan to make language serve his interests illustrates that his narrative intention is far from altruistic. In fact, "tampering with the 'truth'" by shaping the past according to his ideas and wishes enables Lombard to benefit as a clergyman (Pelletier 76). Acknowledging that it is impossible to present neutral facts, the Archbishop is tempted to use his linguistic power to write a biography for the public which suits his private interests:

> People think they just want to know the 'facts'; they think they believe in some empirical truth, but what they really want is a story. […] I'm simply talking about making a pattern. […] And that narrative will be as true and as objective as I can make it – with the help of the Holy Spirit. (*History* 334)

Referring to "the help of the Holy Spirit," Lombard not only indicates that with the help of God he will not disappoint Hugh but also proves that he is eager to strengthen the position of the Catholic Church in Ireland by means of this biography. Moreover, Lombard's quote recalls Foucault's notion that discourse "defines and produces the object of [people's] knowledge" (as quoted by Hall 44). The power of language is then closely related to the creation of a kind of reality which the producer of the discourse desires. Indeed, Lombard would, for religious reasons, prefer to exclude part of Hugh's private life because his four wives might shock Lombard's (Catholic) readership and might make a public presentation of him as an Irish hero unfeasible. Hugh, on the other hand, states that to omit his four marriages is to deny a crucial aspect of his life. Favouring private versions of truths over the type of narrative Lombard has in mind, Hugh hopes to have the absolute truth and his innermost sensations revealed by the text.

This clash between Lombard's postmodern understanding of historiography and Hugh's insistence on private truth as an absolute concept recalls Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*, in which the philosopher contemplates the possible existence of a private language that voices a character's immediate and innermost moods, sensations and experiences (95–111). Considering the nature of language, Wittgenstein concludes that a private language would be entirely pointless as it would, by definition, only be accessible to the person who is familiar with the actual meaning of the words used. Hence, the meaning of the words would not be understood by anyone

else and communication would break down entirely. To guarantee some kind of mediation between the different users, Wittgenstein stresses the degree to which each language must be defined by its public character in order to be understood. Consequently, the linguistic transmission of a perfectly private experience between different subjects, especially a character's sensations or feelings such as "pain," can never be complete. Each translation of the experience necessarily remains an approximation to conventions (95–96).

Unlike Lombard, who realises that taking a few liberties in fictionalising truth offers him certain advantages, Hugh not only fights Lombard's approach but also unconsciously rebukes the postmodern nature of language as such, which makes it impossible for another character to precisely capture what he regards as the entire truth of reality. Hugh believes that Lombard's biographical account provides him with the only opportunity to effectively oppose the dominant official discourse of what happened. He is obsessed by the idea of a narrative offering his personal point of view and being faithful to his perceptions of reality in order to give an absolutely truthful version of the past. Lombard's attempt to influence the reader by highlighting or ignoring certain parts of his life greatly annoys the Earl of Tyrone. Deeply suspicious of Lombard's deconstructive and poststructuralist myth-making approach for the sake of the public, Hugh feels the readers should be given the entire truth rather than a version of the events which he does not entirely approve of and which has wilfully been distorted. Having lost the battle against the British forces, Hugh, at the end of the play, begs Lombard to stick to the facts and not to mislead the public. After all, an authentic account of the past is all that he is left with: "I need the truth, Peter. That's all that's left. The schemer, the leader, the liar, the statesman, the lecher, the patriot, the drunk, the soured, bitter émigré – put it *all* in, Peter. Record the *whole* life" and tell "the whole truth" (*History* 329–330 and 334, original emphasis).

In his study *After Babel*, Steiner notes that, in comparison to the upper classes, to the lower or powerless classes, "speech is no less a weapon and a vengeance" since "[t]he patronized and the oppressed have endured behind their silences, behind the partial incommunicado of their obscenities and clotted monosyllables" (33–34). Having lost the power over the official truth by losing the war of Independence, the Earl of Tyrone is, indeed, anxious to preserve at least the power over the alternative version of truth in his hands. Horrified by Lombard's approach, he concludes that the Archbishop had better trust him to write his own autobiography. However, despite his insistence on precision and authenticity, Hugh, paradoxically but perhaps inevitably, falls into the same trap as Lombard. By adding that "one of the advantages of fading eyesight is that it gives the imagination the edge over reality," he, possibly unconsciously, hints at the fact that writing his own

autobiography will result in a personal narrative which cannot eliminate the linguistic rules detected by Wittgenstein in his private language argument and will therefore be inevitably defined by being a combination of fact and fiction (*History* 333). In fact, this last statement underlines Wittgenstein's conclusion that in using language one is forced to accept that "words are connected with the primitive, the natural, expressions the of sensation and used in their place" (Wittgenstein 89). Thus, even if one strives for authenticity, the law of language, which Lacan refers to as 'the Symbolic,' does not coincide with reality but only echoes it. In this context, Wittgenstein's example of "pain" and the "beetle," helps to explain why Friel's characters regularly despair of their attempts to communicate their most private feelings and moods and why they tend to withdraw into silence as a result of their frustrating experiences:

> If I say of myself that it is only from my own case that I know what the word 'pain' means – must I not say the same of other people too? And how can I generalize the *one* case so irresponsible? [...] Suppose everyone had a box with something in it: we call a 'beetle'. No one can ever look into anyone else's box, and everyone says he knows what a beetle is only by looking at *his* beetle. – Here it would be quite possible for everyone to have something different in his box. [...] That is to say: if we construe the grammar of expression of sensation on the model of 'object and designation' the object drops out of consideration as irrelevant. (106–107, original emphasis)

Despite yearning for coherence and understanding in their lives, Friel's characters doubt whether any character except themselves really succeeds in grasping the "essential" sensation or feeling which they describe in their own private experiences (95). As Welch indicates, "Friel's theatre [...] is the place for realizing the *lack* of congruence between the word and the situation" (147). Struggling to accept that there are, as Steiner states, "no twin psyches" as "[n]o two human beings share an identical associative context" as "such a context is made up of the totality of an individual existence, because it comprehends not only the sum of the personal memory and experience but also the reservoir of the particular subconscious," Friel's characters tend to stop communicating their sensations and lapse into silence in conversation with other characters (178–179). Because the characters are afraid of being unable to communicate the incommunicable essence of their sensations or experiences, I would suggest that what Welch says of Gar O'Donnell and the other characters in *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* in fact, applies to Friel's characters in general:

> Private Gar continuously underlines the difficulty of adequately conveying, in the social context of life [...] in Ballybeg, the complexity of a human narrative. [...] None of the characters in the play can find a language capable of conveying their own view of how they are to any other character. They cannot 'translate all this loneliness, this groping, this dreadful bloody buffoonery.' [*Philadelphia* 88] But Friel's theatre *does*

> translate it, by making evident the gap between the realm of desire and that of necessity and by making that gap the object of our contemplation. (137–138)

Wittgenstein's theoretical considerations are, therefore, useful for the analysis of Friel's oeuvre insofar as the playwright's characters – like so many characters witnessed in Anglo-Irish literature throughout the centuries – display a strong need to publicise their private truth and oppose it to dominant public discourse. However, the necessary gap which results from the transfer of reality to the linguistic representation of a situation or sensation and which Wittgenstein contemplates in his private language argument fills Friel's characters with a deep feeling of uncertainty and unease. Exploring their inner *selves*, Friel's characters frantically try to make their true identity and personality known to themselves and to others.

In his essay "A History of Secrets?" Vincent declares that "[t]he history of private life is also a history of various kinds of fear" (173). In Friel's writing, the protagonists are almost invariably horrified of being misunderstood by their peers. However, as the discussion of the terms *private* and *public* has shown, people's comfort and security is closely related to the overlap of familiarity with privateness in modern times. As soon as Friel's characters feel that their concepts of *home* are threatened, their belief in their own existence or *Dasein* is fundamentally shaken. Hardly able to bear life in a world devoid of security *and* homeliness, a world that has nothing in common with their personal notions of what constitutes *home* as a haven of safety and shelter, they withdraw into their private realm to suppress their isolation and the loss of their sense of belonging.

When analysing the inability of Friel's characters to share their private grief and sorrows with those round them, repression as an act of self-protection plays an important role. Freud argues that a necessary precondition for repression is a person's objective to avoid "unpleasure" (147). Counting repression as a "method of defence," Freud explains that "*the essence of repression lies simply in turning something away, and keeping it at a distance, from the conscious*" because

> the satisfaction of an instinct which is under repression would be quite possible […] [and] in every instance such a satisfaction would be pleasurable in itself; but it would be irreconcilable with other claims and intentions. It would, therefore, cause pleasure in one place and unpleasure in another. It has consequently become a condition for repression that the motive force of unpleasure shall have acquired more strength than the pleasure obtained from satisfaction. (147, original emphasis)

By sharing their intimate thoughts or feelings with the characters around them, Friel's characters would allow the others to gain power through

knowledge, which they could abuse to harm the character who has formerly disclosed his or her inner self. Thus, afraid that the other characters who would, therefore, know about their most personal anxieties or worries could cause them "unpleasure," Friel's characters, in spite of their existential need to express their private world and sorrows, often end up keeping their feelings secret even from their friends and relatives.

One of the most striking examples of repression in Friel's plays is found in *Wonderful Tennessee*. Stranded on Ballybeg pier and failing to reach Oileán Draíochta, the island which "stands as a symbol of all their [i.e. the three couples'] desires for transcendence and release from immediate reality," the six protagonists are forced to spend their night camping outside (Coult 112). In order to pass the time, they sing and tell stories. Emmert points out that

> the story-telling [...] does not only put the birthday party in a row with the tradition of the pilgrims of the *Canterbury Tales*, but also establishes a proximity with the tales in *Arabian Nights* which are narrated for self-preserving purposes. (221, my translation)[38]

The stories the characters in *Wonderful Tennessee* appreciate most are the familiar ones. Frank, Terry's brother-in-law, argues that "[a]ll we want of a story is to hear it again and again and again and again and again," implying that people feel most comfortable and secure with the repetition of the well-known (*Tennessee* 409). As the same old stories contain nothing overwhelming or frightening, the couples much prefer them to the unexpected ones, such as Terry's tale of a young man who was killed on Oileán Draíochta. Indicating that "[w]e are products of stories we tell about ourselves" and that "[w]e are the protagonists in narratives we have internalized," McGrath hints at the extent to which narratives answer people's "need for love, hope, dignity, self-esteem, meaningfulness, or sometimes just the need to escape an existence that is mundane, meaningless or painful" (13). Although each character in *Wonderful Tennessee* has serious problems on his or her mind, their casual conversation is trivial. It appears to be too distressing for the characters to publicly acknowledge or address what pre-occupies their minds. From this point of view, the three couples' outing can be seen as an attempt to escape reality for one night and their singing and storytelling games can be interpreted as life-sustaining activities.

As the characters' troubles and worries linger below the surface of their "raucously celebrating" of Terry's birthday, Cave argues that "little of this [i.e. their efforts to cope with disappointment] is openly stated; the frictions and

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[38] Original: Das Erzählen von Geschichten [...][reiht] die Geburtstagsgesellschaft nicht nur in die Pilgertradition der *Canterbury Tales* ein, sondern rückt sie auch in die Nähe der aus Selbsterhaltung erzählten Geschichten aus *Tausendundeiner Nacht* (221).

tensions, the anxieties and yearnings, the repressed anger and subdued fatalism are rather *sensed*" (195, original emphasis). Both consciously and unconsciously, the protagonists repress their thoughts or, when they do mention what disturbs or troubles them, the other characters immediately change the topic to repress the issue. Thus, in *Wonderful Tennessee*, "meaning lies behind what is actually uttered and is to be inferred through details of tone, placing of actors in relation to each other within the stage space, gesture" (Cave 195–196). Thus, "what is spoken is frequently a veiled surface behind which profounder, more urgent and private dramas are being played out by the characters" (196). Gradually the audience learns about the six characters' private miseries, as the protagonists' traumas or problems resist repression and are, therefore, regularly evoked again. Behind each other's backs, the protagonists begin to share personal information with one another. At the beginning of the play and just after their arrival in Ballybeg, Berna, a barrister who is psychologically unstable, begs her husband Terry to take her home. Terry, who is having an affair with Berna's sister Angela, dryly belittles Berna's panic:

> BERNA. Take me home, Terry – please. […] Have you any idea how desperately unhappy I am? […] I don't think I can carry on, Terry.
> TERRY. Of course, you can carry on. The doctor says you're a lot better. (*He reaches out to touch her.*) Did you remember to take your pills this morning? (*Tennessee* 352)

Officially, Terry pays more attention to the doctor's words than to Berna. However, talking to his sister Trish, Terry at a later stage admits that he is familiar with Berna's truth of being "most content when she's in the nursing home" (379). This demonstrates that he knows his wife's feelings although he silenced her earlier by denying her perception of the excursion as a nightmarish experience. In a very intimate discussion with her sister Angela, Berna herself reveals that, according to Terry, the root of her problems lies in their childlessness. In reality this has never troubled her. She suggests instead that he "[m]arried the wrong sister" and explains that "[w]hen you [i.e. Angela] married Frank a little portion of him atrophied. Then he turned to me. I'm the surrogate" (387). Aware of being second choice, Berna concludes that "[h]e has no happiness with me – Terry. Not even 'about-to-be' happiness. He should leave me. I wouldn't mind if he did. I don't think I'd mind at all. Because in a way, I feel I have moved beyond all that" (387). Berna's reasons for sharing this information with Angela remain equivocal; the text does not indicate whether she trusts Angela as a sister or whether she has told her because Angela causes her pains. It also remains uncertain whether Berna knows that Angela and

Terry are (still) having an affair. If she does know, she keeps these feelings secret, despite talking about Terry's lack of love and her indifference to him. Even when Berna climbs to the top of the wall towards the end of the night and jumps from the pier into the sea, her action again remains ambiguous. Defending herself by claiming that she had previously announced she wanted to go swimming, Berna declares that it has had a purifying and refreshing effect on her. However, Trish, her sister-in-law, scolds her, suggesting that her action "was a naughty thing to do. It was a cruel thing to do. [...] Particularly cruel to Terry" (416). Trish believes that Berna's jump was an attempt to commit suicide in order to frighten or even punish Terry. Since Berna abruptly changes the topic after Trish's reprimand, no solution is offered by the text. As Berna's private reasons for jumping are hidden, a certain degree of uneasiness remains with the audience as well as with the other characters; to repress the awkwardness which has been aroused by the incident, the couples start singing a traditional Irish folksong pretending nothing has happened.

Trish's husband George is hardly able to participate in the conversation and the storytelling at all. Suffering from a terminal illness, he has nearly lost his voice. Trish tells Terry "to stop sending that huge cheque every week" because George has no more than three months to live and they can "manage fine" without it (365). When Terry asks whether George is aware of how much time he has left, Trish quickly says, "[h]e's very brave about it," and immediately changes the topic again. She prefers not to go into any detail. A thoroughgoing discussion might be too intimate or painful for her; she supresses such thoughts and distracts Terry by announcing to the others that her brother is "going to make a speech" (365). George himself only mentions his health at the very end, when he tries to convince Angela to return to this place: "You'll come back some day. [...] And when you do, do it for me. No, no, I don't mean *for* me – just in memory of me" (445, original emphasis). George's sudden public acknowledgement of his terminal illness surprises Angela. According to the stage directions, "*[s]he looks at him for a second. Then quickly, impetuously, she catches his head between her hands and kisses him*" (445). Her reaction indicates that one reason for repressing and silencing the most intimate aspects of life is that such conditions as George's go beyond language. Angela's behaviour recalls her husband's story. Frank has told the others a story of monks who see apparitions and are in touch with "[w]hatever it is we desire but can't express. What is beyond language. The inexpressible. The ineffable" (398). In a situation of utter hopelessness or impending death, the characters no longer find any words to articulate their feelings and emotions; gestures are used instead, while their fears and uncertainties are denied for as long as possible.

Shortly before their return home, Terry, who, apparently, has financially supported the three families for years, announces that he is bankrupt and will not be able to keep the island:

> Things will pick up. The tide will turn. I'll rise again. […] To own Oileán Draíochta for two whole months – wasn't that wonderful enough? Wasn't that a terrific secret to have? Anyway … One small thing. I'd be glad if you kept it to yourselves – that I'm broke. Don't want a hundred creditors descending on me. (441)

Concerned about the financial future of the other two couples, Terry finds it hard to admit to being insolvent and leaves the revelation until the last minute. After all, they all depend on his income. Moreover, as the two other couples have kept praising him for his success and thanking him for his generosity throughout the trip, he appears to be embarrassed and to regard this temporary situation as a personal failure. Finally, he knows that in a society where any negative publicity could be the end, secrecy – or at least his relatives' discretion – is a matter of survival and self-protection. His attempt to keep his bankruptcy secret from the public might well be his only chance to rise again in his fortunes.

In *Faith Healer*, *Molly Sweeney* and to some extent in *Philadelphia*, *Here I Come!* repression turns into a personality trait which is characteristic of the main protagonists. While the conversation between Public Gar and his father resembles the trivial exchange found in *Wonderful Tennessee*, there is no more communication between the characters in *Faith Healer* and *Molly Sweeney*. Referring to Bakhtin's theory of the dialogic nature of discourse, Emmert observes that

> Bakthin regards the dialogic relationship of the speaker to himself as fundamental for a monologue, which is based 'on the disclosure of the *inner man*, of one's 'own self,' which is not accessible by passive introspection, but only by means of an active, *dialogic approach to one's own self*. (84, original emphasis, my translation)[39]

Thus, although the protagonists' longing for warmth, understanding and a stable sense of belonging is repressed on the level of the plot in Friel's writing, the audience, who listens to the characters' monologues or follows Private Gar's revelations and subtexts to the monosyllabic conversation with his father, is made familiar with the characters' personal needs.

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[39] Original: Bachtin betrachtet das dialogische Verhältnis des Sprechers zu sich selbst als wesentlich für den Monolog, dem „die Öffnung des *inneren Menschen* zugrunde [liegt], des 'eigenen Selbst', das nicht passiver Selbstbeobachtung, sondern nur aktiver *dialogischer Einstellung zum eigenen Selbst* zugänglich ist (84).

In one of her monologues, the eponymous protagonist in *Molly Sweeney* recalls the "pre operation party [sic] held in her honour" the night before she underwent her eye surgery (Higgins 99). Her husband's phrase that the evening felt "like a wake" already foreshadows the final outcome of the operation which deprives Molly of her home and the life she has been familiar with up to this point (*Molly* 29). Indicating that the spontaneous gathering of a number of friends and neighbours to celebrate Molly's impending operation "asserts her [i. e. Molly's] position as a valued friend and neighbour," Higgins identifies the main protagonist's "'special knowledge' of the community" as "the social glue that binds them together" (99). The occasion described by Molly, indeed, illustrates the high estimation the main protagonist holds among her circle of friends, which is partly due to her ability to understand the incommunicable of the Ballybeg society. The frequent visits the other characters pay to Molly when she lives in the sanatorium at the end of the play give further evidence of her popularity and her crucial function as a figure of bonding within this local community. However, that particular night, despite sensing a considerable degree of friction among her friends and neighbours, Molly is equally incapable of articulating her anxieties and her concerns as the other characters. Instead of addressing the feelings of anger and hatred which she senses, Molly only mentions the neighbours' marital problems and Mr O'Neill's devastation over the loss of his wife retrospectively. Describing to the audience the memories of that particular night, which the group spent singing and reciting poems, Molly recollects how Tony and Betty, whose daughter, as she proudly declares, had been named after her, sang 'Anything You Can Do I Can Do Better' (*Molly* 30). Although Molly states that "there was so much tension between them you knew they weren't performing at all," the prevailing atmosphere of unease and strain between the two characters is not touched upon in the conversation (30). Moreover, Molly reveals that whereas Jack Quinn "wasn't drinking for some reason," his wife Mary "certainly was" (29). In contrast to Tony and Betty's case, Billy Hughes, "an old bachelor friend of Frank" who arrived at the party already "well tanked," publicly refers to the delicate situation between the couple when he invites Jack to "do the decent and volunteer to leave since he was in a bad mood and wasn't drinking anyway" (29–30).[40] Jack's wife immediately welcomes Billy's proposal as "the brightest idea all evening" (30). However, her statement also demonstrates that rather than really articulating the tensions

[40] In *Molly Sweeney*, intoxication serves as a powerful means to cope with problems. Apart from Billy Hughes and Mary Quinn, Mr Rice is said to "[reek] of whiskey" (26). The "suffocating" smell of alcohol repeatedly reminds Molly of her own father, a judge, of whom Molly says that every night he used to come home and "after he'd had *a few quick drinks*, he'd pick me up in his arms and carry me out to the walled garden" (66 and 13, my emphasis).

and difficulties between herself and her husband, she would prefer if Jack left and allowed her to indulge in the state of oblivion or repression that appears to define the mode in which this group of friends tackle their personal problems. Compared to Molly's guests, most of whom are shown to struggle with their private difficulties, the audience realises that the main protagonist's life, despite the fact that it does not conform to the norm, is considerably happy before her operation. Still, when the "fiddler" Tom McLaughlin starts to play "The Lament for Limerick," Molly can no longer repress how "utterly desolate" she feels (30 and 31). Afraid of losing the life she has known and upset that "nobody once mentioned the next day or how they thought the operation might go," Molly concludes that the other characters prefer to suppress the true reason for gathering in Frank and Molly's home by silencing her own as well as their insecurity (31). Molly finally concludes that "because nothing was said, maybe that made the occasion a bit unreal, a bit frantic" (31). Trying to release the tension which has gradually built itself up inside herself in the course of the evening, Molly

> in a rage of anger and defiance [...] danced a wild and furious dance round and round that room; then out to the hall; then round the kitchen; then back to the room again and round it a third time. Mad and wild and frenzied. But so adroit, so efficient. No timidity, no hesitations, no falterings. Not a glass overturned, not a shoulder brushed. Weaving between all those people, darting between chairs and stools and cushions and bottles and glasses with complete assurance, with absolute confidence. Until Frank said something to Tom and stopped him playing. (31–32)

No longer able to comply with what Molly perceives as her friends' and neighbours' need to repress their inner world and feelings, Molly "expresses her fear at the forthcoming ordeal in a frenzied dance" which is as "clearly an expression of self as in *Dancing at Lughnasa*" as "a vivid enactment of her skilful negotiation of the tensions and rivalries in the community" (Higgins 99). Corbett claims that, in this dance, "Molly is expressing something beyond words, but also demonstrating before the audience of neighbours and friends that her mastery of her world is quite as complete as their casual acceptance of theirs" (127). Therefore, Molly's operation has its true origin in the power of the norm. From this point of view, Molly's dance is, as in *Dancing at Lughnasa*, a "momentary rebellion" before the power of the majority crushes the alternative lifestyle of the other and forces Molly to adhere to the ideology and inherent principles of Ballybeg society (Harris 44).

Following her negative presentiments and her "sudden anger" the night before the operation when she realises that the other characters have no idea what they are depriving her of, Molly soon deteriorates after her eye surgery (*Molly* 31). Likewise Jack and Mary Quinn's relationship does not survive the

silence and tension that exists between the couple. In her last monologue in hospital, Molly tells the audience that, although Mary often visits her at the hospital, she "hasn't told me yet but I'm afraid Jack has cleared off" (65). The only friendship that Molly mentions which has improved since she moved to the hospital is the one between Rita and herself. In spite of normally living in a world of her own, Molly still enjoys listening to Rita sharing the latest gossip with her. In the end, the two friends are as attached as they were before Frank entered Molly's life and before she underwent the operation to please him. Nonetheless, acknowledging the failure of her own marriage, Jack and Mary Quinn's separation as well as Mr O'Neill's transfer to a hospice in her final speech, Molly serves as an illustration of Niel's claim that because the characters on stage do not communicate with one another, "only the audience [...] – and this is once more typical of Friel – is able to recognise the full extent of failure" in *Molly Sweeney* ("Brian Friel" 43, my translation).[41] The audience thus witnesses the degree of tragedy in the Ballybeg community, where the various members portrayed in the play tend to repress their problems and tend to suffer silently instead of addressing their problems openly.

In an interview with Kurdi about Brian Friel's Theatre, Pine pinpoints "the until recently prevailing difficulty of talking about emotions, talking about relationship, inhibitions which are there partly from the school system, partly from the religious environment" and concludes that in Irish society "[p]eople do not open up and talk about things" (Kurdi 306). Yet, Pine argues that, although the Irish are not used to publicising their feelings and emotions, scenes centring Gar O'Donnell in *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* or the autistic girl Bridget in *Give Me Your Answer, Do!* "will strike chords [...] [as] many people cannot talk about" their inner *selves* (Kurdi 307). After all, "[i]t's something that is familiar to the Irish Catholic mindset, because it has to do with the 'confessional' method of communicating and gaining some level of absolution from that silent experience or exorcizing oneself from it" (307). I would like to put Pine's expression "the 'confessional' method of communicating" into a context with Foucault's *History of Sexuality*. I believe that while a large number of characters in Friel lack the gift of the gab in conversation with other protagonists, they are what is defined by Foucault as "a confessing animal" who "confesses one's crimes, one's sins, one's thoughts and desires, one's illnesses and troubles" and quite generally "goes about telling, with the greatest precision, whatever is most difficult to tell" (59). In Foucault's opinion, people's constant "self-examination" has become a defining element

41 Original: Nur der Zuschauer [...] – und das ist wieder einmal typisch für Friel – kann das ganze Ausmass des Scheiterns erkennen (43).

in the history of Western religious practices established since the Middle Ages. In fact, he believes that "[t]he obligation to confess" is indeed "so deeply ingrained in us, that we no longer perceive it as the effect of a power that constrains us; on the contrary, it seems to us that truth, lodged in our most secret nature, 'demands' only to surface" (60). Arguing that "[c]onfession frees" while "power reduces one to silence," Foucault links the disclosure of private knowledge to "truth" and "freedom" (60) and, thereby, recalls Sofsky's claim that "[t]here has never been a society in which people have not sought to occupy their own terrain and to defend it against attacks" (24). Prevented from articulating their private knowledge either because of their personality, the cultural environment or their life in Ballybeg during the colonial age when their private views were negated or silenced, Friel's characters invariably withdraw into the private realm in order to answer their existential need to make their most intimate thoughts known. Thus, they resemble Foucault's confessing animal that has internalised confessional practices by irrevocably giving a detailed account of "what one is and what one does, what one recollects and what one has forgotten, what one is thinking and what one thinks he is not thinking" (60).

In *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* Gar yearns for love and warmth within his home. Under the supervision or even surveillance of his father, who treats him like an infant and will not let him "order even a dozen loaves without getting [his] permission," Gar believes he cannot articulate his feelings or lead an independent life (*Philadelphia* 40). In the course of the play, the audience learns that Gar's father is unaware of the effect he has on his son. He does not realise that Gar feels that he is being controlled. Wondering about their relationship, the father suggests to the housemaid that perhaps their difficulties arise from the fact that he "could have been his [i. e. Gar's] grandfather" (107). However, the problem between the father and the son is not, as Gar believes, one of control, or as his father is convinced, of age, but primarily one of (mis-) communication.

Like many of Friel's characters, Gar and his father cannot share their private thoughts within their home or in public because they, both consciously and unconsciously, repress their fears to protect themselves and to avoid embarrassing themselves in front of others or being subjected to power from the outside. At the beginning of *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* Private Gar argues that any conversation between him and his father is pointless since their interactions have no real meaning. Whatever they say or do is ritualised; Private Gar easily predicts his father's sentences or actions (38–39). Private Gar even admits that his true reason for leaving Ballybeg and his father is that "*we embarrass one another*" (40, original emphasis). Incapable of talking to his father in an intimate and familiar fashion, Public Gar cannot express his

'private side.' Longing for an intimate and relaxed chat with his father which would at long last acknowledge their (deep) relationship and reduce their mutual estrangement, Public Gar is shown to prepare and practise his public conversations in private. Nevertheless, whenever the opportunity for an exchange of thoughts or feelings arises, the father-son conversations remain tight-lipped and banal in comparison to Private Gar's previous imaginary versions. Private Gar once admits: "If one of us were to say, 'You're looking tired' or 'That's a bad cough you have', the other would fall over backways with embarrassment" (40). Consequently, just like his father, he keeps all his thoughts and desires to himself. He hardly ever makes his secret or private side known out of fear of embarrassing either his father or himself. Describing Gar's father as an "undemonstrative, unappealing, unprepossessing figure, his mind fixed on practical matters and his emotions heavily under wraps," O'Brien aptly defines Gar's life as "an emotional and cultural wasteland" (*Friel* 49 and 48). He rightly concludes that "Gar is not his [father's] victim; he is his heir. He represents an intensification of his father's mentality rather than the antithesis of it" (49). Horrified by the stiffness and customary silence in the O'Donnell household, Madge, their housekeeper and Gar's most intimate relation, finally decries the father's lack of initiative to change the communicative situation by addressing him in an ironic voice: "The chatting in this place would deafen a body. Won't the house be quiet enough soon enough – long enough?" (*Philadelphia* 41) Private Gar's imitation of the O'Donnell clock, "[t]ick-tock-tick-tock-tick-tock," reveals that this comment is met by stunned speechlessness (41). Even on these rare occasions, when a certain degree of intimacy could be established between father and son, they lapse into silence and withdraw into their own secure space of privateness to which the other one has no access, either because they are ill at ease or overwhelmed by their emotions. In an attempt to calm himself and to ease the tension which Madge's statement has built up between Public Gar and his father, Private Gar starts to quote the opening lines of Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*: "It is now sixteen or seventeen years since I saw the Queen of France, then the Dauphiness, at Versailles…" (41). Whenever anything unusual or 'revolutionary' happens in the O'Donnell household, such as Madge reproaching Gar's father for his inarticulateness, which seems to threaten the stifling, stultifying and dismal atmosphere, Private Gar cites what has been described by Jones as "essentially a defence of the *ancient régime*" (24, original emphasis). Albeit longing for change and for intimacy in his home, Private Gar cannot handle the situation when the stiffness he is familiar with is even vaguely undermined. Thus, silence in the O'Donnell household has, paradoxically enough, both a disturbing and reassuring character.

Lacking the language to express intimacy and emotions, Public Gar fails to communicate the private truth that he longs for his father to establish a link to him and his inner self, Private Gar. The play culminates in Public Gar's revelation that apart from his desperation over their poor communicative patterns and his failure to ask permission to marry the girl he loves, he no longer knows why he is about to emigrate: "I don't know. I – I – I don't know" (*Philadelphia* 110). Yearning for his father's recognition of his true or inner self, Berkeley's *esse est percipi* shows that Gar's expectations must necessarily fail because he does not manage to make his father part of his private world. Ironically enough, intimacy and confidentiality, the two aspects Public Gar is no longer able to experience or recognise in the relationship with his father, are established on a theatrical level between the protagonist's *alter ego* and the audience.

Whereas *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* addresses the difficulties which the lack of communication causes on a personal level, the manifold consequences that the loss of the Irish language and the cultural identity has had on the Gaelic population are portrayed in Friel's masterpiece *Translations*, the second play apart from *Making History* with a colonial background. The play's "action takes place in a hedge-school in [...] Baile Beag/Ballybeg, an Irish-speaking community" in August 1833 (*Translations* 10). The play is set at a time when the British army arrive in the village because "[h]is Majesty's government has ordered the first ever comprehensive survey" of Ireland and the soldiers are, therefore, asked to produce a detailed map of the country and anglicise all the Irish place names (31). In a conversation about the different languages spoken in Ballybeg, Hugh, the schoolmaster of the hedge school, explains that, although he speaks English like his two sons, he prefers to teach Greek and Latin to the local inhabitants. He expresses his conviction that the Irish "culture and the classical tongues [make] a happier conjugation" than English and Irish, because, in his opinion, English is a language which "couldn't really express" the Irish people (25).

Choosing to have the supposedly Irish-speaking characters use Hiberno-English to converse with one another on stage, Friel has found an impressive means to illustrate the enormous sense of loss the Irish population has suffered by being deprived of their language and culture. After all, forced to voice their sensations and feelings in English, the characters are, according to Hugh, no longer able to fully articulate themselves.[42] Indirectly taking up Hugh's point

[42] In *Translations*, the schoolmaster, Hugh, teaches his grown-up students Greek and Latin. Their meetings appear to have a social function as well as an educational one. In the *Times Literary Supplement*, Seamus Heaney partly blames the National School system for the loss of the Gaelic language arguing that, in *Translations*, "[w]e do not hear Irish on the stage, of

that the language of the Irish population after the advent of the British army fails to represent their reality in a satisfying manner, Corbett states in his introduction to *Brian Friel: Decoding the Language of the Tribe*: "In *Translations*, Friel pinpoints the moment at which the Irish psyche divided. As the language of the people no longer matched the landscape in which they lived, so the people became displaced in their homes" (2). Corbett's analysis of a situation in which a people's home is no longer associated with security and a reasonably strong sense of belonging but turns into a space of alienation, which is linked with the new and unknown, is encapsulated in a nutshell in the first scene of *Translations*, in which Hugh's son Manus is trying to teach Sarah, who has been mute all her life, to speak at all.

Sarah's body language reveals how frightening this new access to intercourse and communication with those around her is for her: "*She is sitting on a low stool, her head down, very tense, clutching a slate on her knees*" (*Translations* 11). Making a huge effort to express herself in public, she eventually succeeds in articulating her own identity by timidly declaring: "My name is Sarah" (12). Celebrating Sarah's breakthrough, Manus announces that this phrase will open up an entirely new world for her, which will offer him some insight into her secret world: "Soon you'll be telling me all the secrets that have been in that head of yours all these years" (12). Jones highlights that in this incident in which "[n]ame and identity are synonymous [...] Sarah's first words are an act of personal identification" (70). In fact, both Sarah's phrase and Manus' reaction bring to mind Lacan's concept of the mirror stage. Against the background of Lacan's theory, which stresses the role of language in the formation of subjectivity, Sarah's sentence is significant in her own development as a subject. In the eyes of the normative society of Ballybeg, represented by Manus, Sarah's expression allows her to leave behind the stage of "a prelinguistic, pre-Oedipal infant whose subjectivity is formless, shapeless and otherwise fragmented" and to linguistically identify herself as an active member of the community who can communicate her inner world to other characters, who can share her secrets with them and who "as a separate being in a world of objects" has, at least unconsciously, some kind of notion "of difference and delimitation, self and (m)Other" (Lane, *Fifty* 193). Although Manus triumphantly greets the young woman's step towards communication, Sally's achievement, "to break out of the circle of the *Innenwelt* [i.e. the inner world] into the *Umwelt* [i.e. outer world]," is double-edged; not only will language bind her more closely to the public life of the Ballybeg community but, intruding into her own private sphere, communication will also partly

course – and that 'of course' tells us how successful the National School system was ..." (as quoted by Niel, "Brian Friel" 50).

deprive her of former privacy (Lacan, "Mirror Stage" 138, original emphasis).[43]

Sarah's step towards acquiring the Irish language by leaving her private and mute realm is paralleled by the homecoming of Hugh's younger son Owen, who has worked in Dublin for six years. His arrival in Ballybeg will turn out to mark the moment when the local inhabitants lose their own language and culture and are forced to abandon Irish and accept English as the official language. In fact, Owen's homecoming coincides with his father's return from the local christening and the two people's appearance suddenly interrupts the playful conversation among the Ballybeg community gathered at the hedge school. Their entrance proves Sofsky's claim that in a place

> [w]here everyone knows everyone else, privacy can scarcely be maintained. The more closely woven the social network is, the more oppressive the proximity of others. [...] Being completely integrated means being bound by social fetters. Everything private is public. Every offense against customs and etiquette is immediately noted. Freedom grows only when distance and mobility increase. (31–32)

All of the characters present in the barn are delighted to see Owen, who is supposed to have been exceptionally successful in Dublin. Owen is immedi-

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[43] Tragically enough for Manus, who has spent so much time and effort teaching Sarah how to speak, "the only secret which Sarah will ever tell Manus [...] will lead to the destruction of his hope for love and to the catastrophe at the end of the play" (Niel, "Disability" 209). This scene, which was already mentioned in the Introduction, will be further discussed below (p. 201–202).

The aspect of secrecy witnessed with regard to Sarah's muteness as well as the power of naming, which, as Pine argues, "for Friel as for Beckett is the key to identity," are further emphasised by the scholars' dialogue about a christening which Manus' father Hugh is attending at the beginning of the play (*Ireland's Drama* 15). The naming of a newly born child, or "the ritual of naming," described by the community as the "*caerimonia nominationis*," positions a baby within the community (*Translations* 23, original emphasis). In this particular case, Nellie Ruadh, the baby's mother, causes some tension within Ballybeg society because she has not yet made the name of the child's father known. The discussion among the community members proves that Nellie is playing with the power this secret provides her with:

> BRIDGET. Our Seamus says she [i. e. Nellie] was *threatening* she was going to call it after its father.
> DOALTY. Who's the father?
> BRIDGET. That's the point, you donkey you! (18, my emphasis)

In her study *Secrets in Families and Family Therapy*, Imber-Black states that "[t]hose who hold power become entitled to keep secrets that, in turn, feed back and amplify positions of power. Those who have little or no power are intimidated into silence" (22). Doalty apparently does not realise that Nellie has the power to change the life of a community member by naming her child after the father.

ately confronted with the gossip that has spread as far as Ballybeg demonstrating that, in this remote village, the local community forms a unity from which the individual can hardly keep anything secret. Apparently touched by the warm welcome, Owen expresses his pleasure to be back with "'*civilised*' people" (*Translations* 28, original emphasis). Owen's choice of words seems to indicate that he has not forgotten his background and that he disagrees with the imperialist point of view of the English, who regard the Irish as an *uncivilised* people. However, based on his later behaviour, Owen might intentionally be flattering the inhabitants of Ballybeg before introducing them to his friends. In the course of the play, the audience learns that Owen's demeanour reveals that having lived far from the local population, his customs have changed and he has ceased to feel obliged to comply with "the social fetters" or rules of Ballybeg (Sofsky 32). As Owen encourages the Irish community to offer their hospitality to his friends, he unwittingly asks them to embrace the enemy. Owen's presence will, therefore, have a disastrous effect on the Ballybeg society. Trying to help the two British soldiers who have employed him to anglicise the Irish place names, Owen, rather naively, believes that all he is going to do is translate a number of simple and straightforward words from Irish into English. As will be shown below, this is only one of Owen's misjudgements in the play: no longer part of the Ballybeg community, he has forgotten what defines the Irish psyche. In fact, his actions and misunderstandings illustrate that he is just as unfamiliar with the British mindset as with the other Irish characters.

A short exchange between Manus and Owen offers some insight into Owen's outlook on the world. Explaining that the English either had his name "wrong from the very beginning" or "can't pronounce" his real name, Owen declares recklessly, "Owen – Roland – what the hell. It's only a name. It's the same me, isn't it? Well, isn't it?" (*Translations* 33) Manus' condescending answer, "Indeed it is. It's the same Owen," unveils the older brother's contempt and disagreement. Contrary to Manus, Owen seems perfectly ignorant of the prospect that his cooperation with the British forces could result in the local population's dispossession and alienation and might strip the tribe of its language, culture and freedom.

Equally unaware of the tremendous consequences the personal invitation will have for the public, Hugh trusts his son and proclaims in his welcoming manner: "Your friends are our friends" (28). Thus, as soon as Owen introduces the English Captain Lancey and Lieutenant Yolland to the Irish community, Hugh offers them a glass of whiskey/uisce beatha, pompously translating the Irish words into Latin: "Perhaps a modest refreshment? A little sampling of our *aqua vitae*?" (30, original emphasis) Ironically, Hugh's joke is lost on Lancey and Yolland, as they are the only monolingual characters in the play.

Their inability to understand any other language than their own is a source of amusement for the local inhabitants and signals the intellectual superiority of the Irish. Nonetheless, in the prototypical imperialist manner which intensifies the strong paradox between the soldiers' ignorance and their military power, Lancey talks to the Irish *"as if he were addressing children – a shade too loudly and enunciating excessively"* (30). His patronising behaviour bewilders the Irish; Jimmy cannot avoid wondering, *"Nonne Latine loquitur?"* (30, original emphasis) Embarrassing himself even more, Lancey apologises to Jimmy by saying, "I do not speak Gaelic, sir," causing Owen to finally take control and translate the second part of the Captain's speech (39). However, Owen's translation also offers some interesting insights. As a result of the translation which Owen provides, the audience is made to believe that Owen's true motive for his homecoming is the prospect a powerful job and a good salary. After all, in order to ensure that Lancey's plans do not outrage the Irish, Owen offers a cross-cultural translation in which he omits every piece of information that might offend the Irish. Completely altering some of the Captain's statements, he actually invents an entirely new reality – one that is acceptable for the Irish community:

LANCEY. His majesty's government has ordered the first ever comprehensive survey of this entire country – a general triangulation which will embrace detailed hydrographic and topographic information and which will be executed to a scale of six inches to the English mile.
HUGH. (*Pouring a drink*) Excellent – excellent.
(*Lancey looks at Owen.)*
OWEN. A new map is being made of the whole country.
(*Lancey looks to Owen: Is that all? Owen smiles reassuringly and indicates to proceed.*)
LANCEY. This enormous task has been embarked on so that the military authorities will be equipped with up-to-date and accurate information on every corner of this part of the Empire.
OWEN. The job is being done by soldiers because they are skilled in this work.
LANCEY. And also so that the entire basis of land valuation can be reassessed for purposes of more equitable taxation.
OWEN. This new map will take the place of the estate-agent's map so that from now on you will know exactly what is yours in law.
LANCEY. [...] the present survey has for its object the relief which can be afforded to the proprietors and occupiers of land from unequal taxation.
OWEN. The captain hopes that the public will cooperate with the sappers and that the new map will mean that taxes are reduced. (31)

Owen's translation conceals the true intention of the English invaders; by anglicising the place names and reassessing the land, they culturally and legally deprive the Irish of their personal property and emphasise their colonial and imperialist intentions. When Manus harshly criticises his younger brother for

betraying his people after the meeting, Owen's answers are evasive and intended to distract Manus:

MANUS. What sort of a translation was that, Owen?
OWEN. Did I make a mess of it?
MANUS. You weren't saying what Lancey was saying!
OWEN. 'Uncertainty in meaning is incipient poetry' – who said that?
MANUS. There was nothing uncertain about what Lancey said: it's a bloody military operation. (32)

Manus seems to be aware of the fact that not only Lancey's survey but also Owen's translation dispossesses the Irish people of their culture, land and language. As soon as the English occupiers take control of the public space – symbolised in the play by Owen and Yolland working in the barn and leaving no space for the Irish scholars – the community's independence as well as the realm of their shared privateness are at stake.

Unlike his brother, Owen is entirely unconcerned about the effect which his work will have on the local inhabitants. In fact, he celebrates his power to produce a new public world by translating the names. Anglicising or even mistranslating Irish place names, he willingly adopts Yolland's expression "welcome to Eden," exclaiming, "Eden's right! We name a thing and – bang! – it leaps into existence!" (45) Like Doctor Rice in *Molly Sweeney* or Frank Hardy in *Faith Healer*, Owen relishes his powerful position. While Doctor Rice and Frank Hardy are granted power for their reputed medical or spiritual knowledge, Owen's immense power is based on his multilingualism. Just like the other two characters, he regards himself as a godlike figure, equipped with the power to create a linguistic reality. However, changing the Irish place names, he denies the roots of his people and imposes a new world and identity on them. Only towards the end of *Translations* does the renaming of every street, river and hill cause Owen to stop and ask his father, somewhat concerned, whether he will still be able to find his way in the 'English village' of Ballybeg (42). This is the first piece of evidence that Owen is becoming worried about depriving his people of their familiarity and homeliness. Lancey's speech after Yolland's disappearance, in which the British soldier threatens to "shoot all livestock in Ballybeg" and to begin "evictions and levelling of every abode" within the community if the missing lieutenant has not been found two days later, finally comes as a sudden and shocking revelation for Owen (61–62). As soon as Lancey has left, Hugh returns home. He takes the Name-Book that Owen has used to translate the place names and starts to memorise the new names. Regretting his collaboration with the British army, Owen, however, "*snatches the book from Hugh*," and says: "I'll take that. (*In apology.*) It's only a catalogue of names. [...] A mistake – my

mistake – nothing to do with us" (66). Hugh, who has missed Lancey's speech, declares his intention to make the new names his own and to accept change in Ballybeg. He explains that "[w]e must learn where we live. We must learn to make them our own. We must make them our new home" (66). Owen's answer, "I know where I live," illustrates that the prodigal son has finally come home to Ballybeg (66).

Contrary to Lancey's denigrating conduct towards the Irish, Yolland glorifies Ballybeg and its inhabitants. Fascinated by the Irish language and the community, Yolland represents "the type of sentimental Englishman who looks on Ireland as a rural paradise" (Corbett 27). However, his encounter with the island and its inhabitants is by no means the result of careful planning. Having missed the boat for India, where he was supposed to work for the East India Company, Yolland decided to join the British army and was immediately transferred to Dublin. Thus, as in McCourt's *Angela's Ashes*, a link is established between India and Ireland; proving that it is utterly irrelevant what colony a British subject travels to, the two places are treated as if they were identical or at least easily comparable. However, Yolland's life takes an interesting and unexpected turn when he falls in love with Manus' girlfriend, Maire, shortly after his arrival in the village. Impressed by people's language as well as their hospitality, Yolland experiences a kind of homecoming. This "momentary sense of discovery [...], a sense of recognition, of confirmation of something [he] half knew instinctively," leads him to dream of a life in Ballybeg (*Translations* 40). Nonetheless, talking to Owen about his future prospects in Ballybeg, Yolland also voices his doubts whether crossing the language and culture barrier will really allow him to become fully integrated in the Irish community: "Even if I did speak Irish I'd always be an outsider here, wouldn't I? I may learn the password but the language of the tribe will always elude me, won't it? The *private* core will always be ... *hermetic*, won't it?" (40, my emphasis) Yolland intuitively senses that, although he might be able to learn the superficial rules of the foreign language, he will always be excluded from the private core of Irishness and might never decode the unspoken elements of the local Irish culture. His statement further illustrates that at a moment in history when the Irish as a tribe lose their power and language to the English, they – as did the poets who wrote *The Poems of the Dispossessed* – paradoxically, still have the power to exclude outsiders from their private lives. Speaking to each other in Gaelic, Greek or Latin, the Irish community in *Translations* repeatedly succeeds in evading the power of the English occupiers. Although Owen requires Manus to talk to Yolland in English "[o]ut of courtesy," Manus refuses to make Yolland part of his private space and deliberately excludes him from the discussions with his brother (37). As a result of this, Duncan notes that "language is a tool of dominance in the hands

of the colonizer and a tool of resistance in the hands of the colonized" (3). Emphasising their multilingualism, the inhabitants demonstrate that they can exercise power through their intellectual superiority over the English soldiers, whose power is based on military strength only. Hugh even quotes Ovid, who suggests that it is a sign of missing education if one cannot converse with the local population because one has no command of their language: "*Barbarus hic ego sum quia non intelligor ulli*" (*Translations* 64, original emphasis). Duncan is right when he highlights that Jimmy's translation of this sentence "ironically indicates that the real barbarians are not the native Irish but the encroaching English soldiers who are not understood by the Irish" (5). Although the English army possesses the power to change the Irish place names, people like Yolland are forced to acknowledge that, regardless of the fact that the British military power considerably weakens the local community, the inhabitants of Ballybeg retain some degree of power to resist the English occupiers. The power of language as well as 'the inarticulate aspect of culture' excludes the English soldiers from the private core of Irishness. In fact, the power of violence or military resistance allegedly leads the radical members in the community to kill Yolland. The hermetic core of life in Ballybeg defines that space which is reserved for the insider, namely the Ballybeg community, and which the radical inhabitants of the village are not willing to share with their enemies and invaders. Dispossessed of the land and confronted with new place names, the private core is the only realm the local community manages to protect and retain after the British occupation.

Before the lieutenant's disappearance, Yolland and Maire develop a remarkable degree of intimacy despite their speaking different languages. Warning Maire about the difficulties one encounters in a cross-cultural and multilingual relationship, Hugh suggests that living between two cultures one is constantly forced to "interpret between privacies" (67). However, in a society in which mutual understanding is hardly ever reached among spouses and members of the same family or tribe, Maire and Yolland manage to enjoy love and happiness together. Thus, I agree with FitzGibbon that, despite "the absence of a common language," the two lovers have "found other means for interpreting each other's privacies" (73).

Thus, in *Translations* as well as in Friel's writing in general where failure in communication connotes an existential condition in human beings and where, according to Lojek, "[e]migration is a constant temptation," of all the different characters in Friel's plays, these two lovers "who do not share a language, have discovered how to understand each other" ("Sense of Place" 186). Aware of their inability to linguistically decode the *other*, the two protagonists experience a moment of perfect fulfilment and unity in their love scene:

YOLLAND. (*Indicating himself*) George.
(*Maire nods: Yes – yes. Then*)
MAIRE. Lieutenant George.
YOLLAND. Don't call me that. I never think of myself as Lieutenant.
MAIRE. What – what?
YOLLAND. Sorry – sorry? (*He points to himself again*.) George.
(*Maire nods: Yes – yes. Then points to herself.)*
MAIRE. Maire.
[…]
YOLLAND. I'm not going to leave here.
MAIRE. Shhh – listen to me. I want you, too, soldier.
YOLLAND. Don't stop – I know what you're saying.
MAIRE. I want to live with you – anywhere – anywhere at all – always – always.
YOLLAND. 'Always'? What is that word – 'always'?
MAIRE. Take me with you, George. (*Translations* 49–52)

However, their happiness does not last. Reminding the reader that their relationship started by waving at each other across the fields, Welch stresses how the two lovers disregard that "the fields that lie between them are fields of language, of discourse" and that "it takes a great deal of work to make the translation, before the field day is possible" (144–145). Paying no attention to these rules, Maire and Yolland "rush headlong, at each other and to disaster," because Sarah, seeing the two lovers, destroys their private tryst (Welch 145). Shouting for Manus, Sarah makes the secret relation between Maire and Yolland public. Manus, enraged and deeply hurt, decides to leave Ballybeg immediately. Sarah, who watches him make his last preparations, is horrified by the result of her action. She feels that by teaching her to speak Manus has given her a deadly weapon to destroy his secret dreams. Before she withdraws from public interaction again, Sarah apologises to Manus, who tries to calm her down and to convince her that

> [t]here is nothing to stop you now – nothing in the wide world. (*Pause. He looks down at her.*) It's alright – it's alright – you did no harm – you did no harm at all. (*He stoops over her and kisses the top of her head – as if in absolution. Then briskly to the door and off.*) (56–57)

The departure of the man Sarah trusts and loves and who gave her access to the public world at the beginning of the play throws her back into isolation and muteness. Sarah's tragic encounter with the *other*, therefore, stands for the entire country's fate as it symbolises "a people's loss of tongue and name" (Smith as quoted by Duncan 8). Her experience of communicating with the public world is rather traumatic; voicing her feelings of shock and surprise, she has made the life of the person she loves a misery. Soon after Sarah has made the affair between Maire and the lieutenant public, Yolland goes missing.

When confronted by Captain Lancey, the inhabitants of Ballybeg officially know nothing about Yolland's whereabouts. Privately, however, they presume that the lieutenant has been murdered by radical members of their community who insist on endogamous marriage practice ("*endogamein*"); these people disapprove of characters, like Maire, who "cross those borders casually" by marrying outside the tribe ("*exogamein*") and who threaten the lives of the entire community by embracing the enemy (*Translations* 68). These phrases by local inhabitants unveil how uneasy the community feel about Yolland's presence. Manus' statement, "I understand the Lanceys perfectly but people like you puzzle me," shows that people are even more suspicious of Yolland because he cannot be categorised as a prototypical occupier (37). To people like Manus, an invader like Yolland who is involved in renaming their environment and thereby deprives the local inhabitants of their cultural heritage, cannot develop an interest in the Irish culture and community at the same time. Failing to fit into the local inhabitants' simplifying scheme of friend or foe, he remains an "enigma" and thus a potential threat for the community (Jones 90).

Paradoxically enough, Maire and Yolland discover the word 'always' in their respective languages, at a time in which the entire life in Ballybeg is being changed forever. When Maire asks Hugh to translate the words for her later, he informs her that, if she wants to learn English, this "silly word" is the wrong one to "start with" (*Translations* 67). Unlike the two lovers, Hugh is a typical representative of Friel's Ballybeg society: he mistrusts language but is convinced that in order to know where he lives and in order to be understood he must learn the new code names. The attitude of familiarising oneself with the necessary codes reminds the audience of his younger son's attitude towards language and culture. When Yolland asks Owen whether he believes the inner core of Irishness is so hermetic that it will always elude him, Owen casually replies: "You can learn to decode us" (40). The development of the play, however, shows that Owen mistakenly regards language as a simple business of translation and believes that the local inhabitants are more open-minded than they really are. Quintessentially, however, I want to suggest that Owen makes a much more fundamental error of judgement; in fact, except for Maire and Yolland, Friel's characters, both inside and across the tribe, lack the code for mutual understanding as there is no absolute transfer from the private to the public realm, no absolute translation of one's sensations and feelings. Not even within the tribe or the family can characters decode each other's private core. In fact, except for Maire and Yolland, this is shown to remain entirely private and hermetic in Friel's work. Deeply frustrated by this insight, the playwright's characters tend to engage in rituals such as singing or dancing or to withdraw to their private realm. Communicating with themselves or with the

audience, they constantly express their woes or talk about their few memories of the past when reality and dream still coincided in their concept of *home* and *happiness*.

Summarising, I believe that Friel's plays underline Steiner's notion that "[a]ny model of communication is at the same time a model of trans-lation, of a [...] transfer of significance" as every "human being performs an act of translation, in the full sense of the word, when receiving a speech-message from any other human being" (47 and 48). In order to communicate one is always obliged to "interpret between privacies" (*Translations* 67). No matter whether two people share the same language or culture, mutual understanding depends on the ability to translate one's own sensations and interpret someone else's feelings, utterances or privateness. As my reading of *Making History* has shown, trusting that one's private truth can be suitably translated into public knowledge is particularly difficult in Friel's work. His characters distrust language as they struggle with the insight that their feelings and experiences will never be perfectly identical with any translation. Hence, unlike Maire and Yolland in the love scene or the Mundy sisters during their dance, whenever Friel's characters use language to communicate their inner selves, they believe that their identity can never be fully grasped or understood and that they remain imprisoned in their *conditio humana*. Still, I fully agree with FitzGibbon and Welch that Friel's true achievement is that his theatre translates and makes public what his characters cannot articulate amongst each other (FitzGibbon 78, Welch 138). Adopting the strong tendency of Irish writers to publicise the private in their texts, Friel has found a number of dramatic means to linguistically represent, on the one hand, his characters' superficial inarticulateness and, to explore, on the other hand, their vivid inner self, quintessentially making both aspects of their personality known to the audience.

5. *Home* in Friel's Writing: A Site of Power and Conflict or a Hell of a H(e)aven

The idea of *home* as a site of happiness, shelter or belonging functions as an underlying metaphor in all of Friel's plays. However, the reality that the playwright's main protagonists experience within their own homes does not correspond with their ideal notions. As a result of this marked discrepancy, Pine claims that Friel's oeuvre displays a deep unease with "the idea of home" (as quoted by Kurdi 311). In fact, the characters' actual home no longer serves as their personal paradise and has ceased to be associated with protection and homeliness. Hence, Friel's obsessive preoccupation with the microcosm

within the community originates in "the whole question of what [actually] constitutes the home" under these circumstances (311).

The concept of *home* is questioned in Friel's plays, for instance, when the main protagonist's fond memory of *home* is unmasked as a myth in *The Loves of Cass McGuire*, when Mabel Bagenal's associations with her old and new homes are characterised by a complex overlapping of *self* and *other* in *Making History*, and when the female protagonist in *Molly Sweeney* is forced to invent a mental realm in order to preserve some freedom and ease in an alternative home. Whereas these different adaptations of home as a site of h(e)aven will be closely examined in the second part of this chapter, the first part will focus on the identification of a number of elements and characteristics which all of the homes in Friel's plays have in common.

Home in Friel's work is a space which can invariably be equated with the realm inhabited by the family. This fact is consistent with Rybczynski's findings in *Home: A Short History of an Idea* that, due to the separation of home and workplace, the two concepts *home* and *family* became closely entangled after the eighteenth century. As outlined in the discussion of the historical transformation of the public and the private realm, *home* gradually came to represent "a more *private* place" and "[t]ogether with this privatization of the home arose a growing sense of intimacy, of identifying the house exclusively with family life" (Rybczynski 39, original emphasis).[44] People began to idealise *home* as "the seat of family life" and as a site of "domestic intimacy" where one experiences comfort and cosiness (48 and 49). In the course of history, *home* thus came to symbolise not only "the house, but also everything that was in it and around it, as well as the people, and the sense of satisfaction and contentment that all these conveyed," whereas *domesticity* began to refer to "a set of felt emotions" which "has to do with family, intimacy, and a devotion to the home, as well as with a sense of the house as embodying – not only harboring – these sentiments" (62 and 75). Hence, the two terms *home* and *family* are often used interchangeably in Friel's writing as *home* serves as a sign of his characters' spatial rootedness and *family* as a sign of their relational or communal sense of belonging. Most importantly, however, the terms denote two complex and precarious concepts as the homes in Friel's oeuvre are places where the main protagonists' ideals of the concepts *home* and *family* as he(a)ven and as a site of fulfilment regularly clash with the reality within their private sphere.

Although the ideal notions that Friel's main characters have of *home* regularly fail to be fulfilled, they resemble prototypical ideas identified by

[44] A more detailed summary by Arendt and Habermas of the transformation of the public and private sphere as a result of historical developments can be found in Chapter II (p. 12 – 19).

Blunt and Dowling in their theoretical approaches to *home*. In their most general definition, these critics describe *home* as "a *place*, a site in which we live" as well as "an idea and an imaginary that is imbued with feelings" of "belonging, desire and intimacy" (2, original emphasis). More concisely, the concept, therefore, denotes "a place/site, a set of feelings/cultural meanings, and the relation between the two" (2–3). Similarly, Willcocks, Peace and Kellaher attribute three different "dimensions" to *home*: "the physical, which relates to objects, spaces, and boundaries; the social, involving people and their relationships and interactions; and the metaphysical, which is the meaning and significance ascribed by individuals and communities to home" (3). Unlike Blunt and Dowling, who indicate that the concept of *home* does not always evoke positive feelings because the failure to realise one's ideal concepts tends to arouse emotions such as "fear, violence and alienation" (2), Willcocks, Peace and Kellaher base their study on the positive or idealistic connotations that people have with this space. Emphasising how important the power of the self over his or her own space is, the critics identify the inner core of one's home and dwelling as "that physical space which an individual habitually uses – and within which people feel secure and in complete control" (3). This view recalls Jung's reading of "an individual's home as the 'universal archetypal symbol of the self'" (as quoted by George 19). Linking the power over one's own space to a person's well-being in her essay "Brian Friel as Postcolonial Playwright," Bertha also stresses the strong psychological dimension of *home*: "Identity, both personal and cultural, is closely related to the idea of home. There is an ontological need for people to feel at home in their own place, country, village …" (156).

In Friel's writing, the characters' expectations of and their longing for autonomy and comfort, however, appear to be incompatible with the (post-) colonial context in which the plays are set: as colonial or postcolonial subjects, the main protagonists are neither firmly rooted in their environment nor in themselves. Contrary to the characters' desires, warmth and understanding are two qualities that are missing or at least not experienced within their homes. The atmosphere within their families and homes, therefore, greatly differs from the main protagonists' ideals or from their memories of brief moments in the past in which their *home* indeed functioned as a site of security, shelter, mutual bonding and happiness.

Due to the prevailing atmosphere in the private realm, most of Friel's characters feel alienated and uprooted in their homes, and the lack of communication within their private sphere symbolises the families' dysfunctionality. Apart from mentioning the (post)colonial context which Friel's characters find themselves in, critics have identified gender aspects as another reason why *home* fails to function as a sanctuary in Friel's oeuvre. As (post-)

colonial subjects or as sons and daughters of a *pater familias* who prevents his children from developing independently and pursuing their interests, the vast majority of the main characters in Friel's plays are deprived of the power to define or to shape home from the inside. The protagonists' feeling dependent on or even under the control of the *pater familias* threatens their process of forming healthy self-concepts and diminishes their belief in their being able to realise their personal dreams.

Whereas the *pater familias* tends to rule the home according to absolutist principles in plays such as *Aristocrats* or *The Home Place*, many of the homes in Friel's plays are defined by the lack of a strong female character within the family.[45] In a considerable number of plays, the mothers are, in fact, dead (*Living Quarters*, *Aristocrats*, *The Gentle Island*, *Translations*, *The Home Place*, *Philadelphia*, *Here I Come!*) or spend part of their time in mental institutions (*Faith Healer*). Considering the striking absence of mother figures in Friel's plays, Harris concludes that few of the remaining women characters portrayed in Friel's plays "could be characterized as psychologically healthy; instead, a parade of passive, frustrated, aggressive, embittered, angry, depressed, slightly crazy women characters march across his stage" (69). Daughters, such as Judith in *Aristocrats* or Hanna in "Losers" (*Lovers*), display a tendency to "raise selflessness to an art" when trying to please their dominant, remorseless and uncommunicative parents (Harris 66). On the other hand, the sons in Friel's plays, such as Gar O'Donnell in *Philadelphia*, *Here I Come!* or Philly and Manus in *The Gentle Island*, are visibly dissatisfied with the situations in which they find themselves. Gar O'Donnell, for instance, interprets the striking lack of communication between his father and himself as a sign of indifference, whereas the audience witnesses that the true problem of Friel's characters is the general inability of articulating their private world to those round them. Due to their communicative deficiency, the characters' existential need to feel at home by being in control of or embedded in their homes is not satisfied.

Thus, Friel's characters resemble those figures in (postcolonial) Anglo-Irish literature who, like Vladimir and Estragon in Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, profoundly lack the rootedness that Bertha claims is needed to feel at home and content with one's existence. As the "Irish identity is no longer a 'home place'" for Friel's characters, their homes turn into sites of conflict while the characters' inner self becomes a source of unease (Higgins 110). The prevailing atmosphere in the homes in Friel's work is, therefore, one of

[45] The only play in which the protagonists are controlled by a female and not by a male character is "Losers" (*Lovers*). Like the various *patres familias* in Friel's plays, Hanna's mother is not presented as an ideal ruler of the household as she denies her daughter and her son-in-law the freedom to develop their own interests and to experience comfort and happiness in their home.

alienation, displacement and loneliness while the characters' states of mind delineate anxiety, bitterness or resignation.

Whereas Heidegger's condition of being 'thrown' into the world constitutes an existential state of being in Beckett's work, Friel's characters do not believe that their condition of 'not-feeling-at-home' in their own private realm is inevitable (*Being and Time* 174). Although the characters feel out of place and are frustrated with the reality they experience within their homes, they seem to be convinced that it is not their "Being-in-the-world" in general – defined by Heidegger as fundamentally a "*Being-with* and *Dasein-with* [*Mitsein* und *Mitdasein]*" – but the actual translation of their ideas and ideals into reality which fails to be realised in a satisfactory manner (149). Thus, they strictly adhere to their ideals of *home* and *family*. Similar to the argument presented by Franklin, who suggests that people have gradually withdrawn from public life to a "place of their own" hoping that it "[will] restore to them a sense of identity, attachment and belonging," Friel's characters invariably dream of *home* as a private space which provides them with shelter and which is defined by love, understanding and intimacy (as quoted by Morley 25).

Nevertheless, unable to share their feelings or experiences with each other or to express compassion or empathy, family members and close friends in Friel's oeuvre, on a superficial level, appear to lack *Sorge* [care] and *Fürsorge* [solicitude], two necessary qualities mentioned by Heidegger to define the state of Being-with, which in itself is referred to as an "existential constituent of Being-in-the-world" (*Being and Time* 163). Hence, there is no mediation between *self* and *other* in Friel's plays: the character's existence is quintessentially one of loneliness rather than one of "*Being-with* Others" (155, original emphasis). As his characters are virtually incapable of articulating their love or emotions or expressing their concern for one another, their lives represent Heidegger's "modes of solicitude" as states in which a character's Being is defined as "without one another, passing one another by, not 'mattering' to one another" (158). Thus, although Friel's protagonists desperately yearn for intimacy and strong family ties and they do care about each other, fathers and sons, in particular, fail to achieve a sense of unity and to establish an atmosphere of protection and security within their private realm. In those homes, where the characters' Being-with-one-another excludes moments of "opening oneself up [Sichoffenbaren]," the characters are disconnected from one another in spite of inhabiting the same space (161).

Whereas George suggests that *home* is a realm "built on select inclusions," a "sense of kinship that is extended to those who are perceived as sharing the same blood, race, class, gender or religion" (9), Friel's protagonists are frustrated with their inability to build a bridge from their "own subject,

which is given proximally as alone, to the other subject, which is proximally quite closed off" (Heidegger, *Being and Time* 162).

As the characters do not succeed in fusing their everyday reality with their ideals of *home* and memories of a happier past, most of Friel's protagonists do not identify with the private realms they inhabit. Instead, manifestations of power within the home or the community often lead to inferiority complexes or the characters' fear of appearing unworthy or frail in other people's eyes. In *Aristocrats*, for example, Eamon describes the characteristic, daunting effect that his father-in-law's home has on him. In order to repress or conceal his own sense of intimidation in this "house of reticence, of things unspoken," Eamon admits that he always chats too much and that, talking for the sake of soothing himself, his utterances mostly remain trivial (279). On the other hand, the issues that are of most concern to Friel's characters are hardly ever addressed. This fact is even more noteworthy when one takes into consideration that the audience frequently learns that, privately, the protagonists' thoughts centre round nothing but articulating their personal sensations, feelings and experiences. Moreover, the protagonists' imaginary conversations with themselves or the audience repeatedly underline how much the characters long for intimate exchange.

Despite these longings for communication, within the private space of their homes there seems to be a tacit agreement which demands that the most intimate or personal aspects of one's life are not spoken about publicly and are thus kept secret from the other characters. After all, disclosing one's inner self might be embarrassing or it might upset or greatly distress other characters. It has been indicated above, for instance, that the main protagonist in *Crystal and Fox* is one of those characters in Friel's writing who is unable to cope with real emotions. Having dismissed the other members of the theatre company, Fox is finally able to spend time with his wife alone. As soon as Fox has realised his dream of *home*, he destroys this happiness because the situation is, emotionally, too overwhelming for him to endure.

Not surprisingly then, silence and reticence are two typical elements in Friel's plays which complicate family matters for the protagonists and threaten their sense of *self*; hence, *home* cannot enhance people's possibilities and strengthen their identity. Since the characters' concept of *home* does not correspond to their reality, their private space is perceived as unstable and loveless; instead of feeling at home in their private realm, the characters lack a secure sense of relational and spatial belonging. Thus, the characters' spatial and emotional homes are no longer equivalent for them.

Commenting on his own roots and background, Friel is said to have described himself as "a member of the Northern minority" and his life as

defined by "a sense of rootlessness and impermanence" (as quoted by Andrews, *Art* 4). Referring to the playwright's own perspective, Andrews indicates that Friel's situation is one in which "[b]eing at home" means "at one and the same time being in exile" (4). In my opinion, the overlapping of exile and home established by Andrews is a state which is frequently encountered by Friel's characters as well. In fact, Pine indicates that Friel's oeuvre explores "the meaning of home as a place constantly defined by the presence of exile, in a way that makes of reverie and reminiscence merely a potently and frighteningly unsatisfactory bridge between privacies and between the public and private worlds" (*Ireland's Drama* 229). In his essay "Building Dwelling Thinking," Heidegger equates the act of "building" with "dwelling" (148). Arguing that "[b]uilding as dwelling unfolds into the building that cultivates growing things and the building that erects buildings," Heidegger concludes that the true "nature of dwelling" is found in the meaning of the Gothic word *wunian*, which means "to be at peace, to be brought to peace, to remain in peace" (148–149). Lacking inner peace and fulfilment and to some extent the power or control to shape their lives as well as public and privates spaces, Friel's characters are utterly unable to pursue their dreams or to "dwell" in order to conceptualise their ideal *homes* (145). Hence, the cosy aspect of *home* is often mingled with a sense of being displaced or banished from paradise.

In his plays, Friel often focuses on families or communities on the verge of disintegrating (*The Gentle Island*, *Translations*, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, *The Home Place*, *Philadelphia*, *Here I Come!*) or he illustrates a character's failed homecoming (*The Loves of Cass McGuire*, *Living Quarters*, *Aristocrats*, *Faith Healer*, *Translations*, *Dancing at Lughnasa*) as these contexts allow him to explore different concepts and metaphors of *home*. As his characters who return home normally end up disillusioned by the situations they find themselves in, Pine remarks that "[h]omecomings and intrusion, more than departures and exile, highlight the sense of fragility, the inherent instability, of homes and families" (*Ireland's Drama* 85).

In *The Loves of Cass McGuire*, the eponymous protagonist, a typical representative of Friel's characters who experience a homecoming, has to accept that her nostalgic memory of home as a site of happiness differs considerably from the reality she encounters after her return from America. Having remained abroad for several decades and convinced that her financial support was of utmost importance to her Irish relatives, she sent ten dollars to her brother's family "every month without fail" for "fifty-two years" (*Cass* 40). Regarding her contribution and selfless assistance as a means of maintaining a strong tie with the family despite the geographical distance, the female protagonist never considered the restrictions this sacrifice actually meant for her. However, after her return to Ballybeg, Cass realises her mistake: she

has to acknowledge that she has preserved a romanticised version of *home* in her mind and has turned this cherished memory into a myth. Her concept of *home*, in fact, stands in such stark contrast to the truth and reality she experiences in the McGuire household in Ballybeg that O'Brien argues that "[t]he home to which Cass returns is as emotionally sterile as that which Gar O'Donnell is about to leave" in *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* (*Friel* 55)

In spite of her brother's initial assertion that "it really is wonderful, Cass, to have you back" and that "[w]e'll make up for all the lost years," Cass has to undergo a process of demythologising her concept of *home* in the course of the play (36 and 37). As a well-respected and rich man, her brother has never been in need of her financial support and has put whatever money he received from Cass into a separate bank account. Ashamed of her language and behaviour, which they describe as vulgar and embarrassing, Harry and his wife soon begin to distance themselves from Cass as they consider her unsuitable company for their family. For Cass, the realisation that the McGuires do not owe her gratitude for sending money home on a regular basis and do not consider her a vital member of their family is particularly painful.

Cass' statements illustrate that sending money home was her mode of staying in touch with her relatives and that her homecoming was a deliberate return to what she regards as her *home* and *family*. However, Harry and his wife "revoke her right to feel a part of this family" when they return her "legacy" (Higgins 15). Informing his sister that they have "arranged for [her] to go into Eden House," a home for the elderly, Harry also indicates that the money she sent home in the past will be used to finance her stay (*Cass* 25). Whereas Harry tells his sister that one of the advantages of moving into Eden House is that "it makes [her] independent of everyone," Alice adds that "[they had] been planning this as a surprise" (41). However, the main protagonist did not seek the independence offered by Alice and her brother. Underlining how central *home* is for most human beings, Willcocks, Peace and Kellaher emphasise that "for most older people home has a psychological and metaphysical significance over and above being a shelter in which to conduct everyday living" (5). For Cass, Eden House thus comes as a negative surprise, if not as a true shock or even a severe punishment.

When Cass first arrives at her brother's house, her concept of *home* closely resembles Papastergiadis' definition of an *ideal home* in that it "is not just a house which offers shelter, or a repository that contains material objects" but it stands for "a place where personal and social meaning are grounded" (as quoted by Blunt and Dowling 22). *Home* thus contains a strong emotional component for Cass. Shortly before Harry announces that he has organised her transfer to Eden House, Cass herself refers to the strong bonding with her brother's family when she talks admiringly about them to the audience.

Comparing herself to Harry's children, she admits that, based on common standards, the young people have done exceedingly well:

> Harry's four kids, boy, they got on good: Betty, she's a doc in London, and Tom's a priest, and Aidan's an architect, and Dom – [...] Fine kids – I haven't met them yet – but you'll see, they'll be along one of these days to meet their Auntie Cass. (*Cass* 24)

This comment also signals that Cass still hopes to become an integral part of the family at this stage. Indeed, she dreams of participating in these young people's lives and engaging in a relationship in which her Being-in-the-world is one of "*Being-with* Others" (Heidegger, *Time and Being* 155, original emphasis).

Realising that she is not really welcome at her brother's home, Cass is temporarily deprived of all illusions about *home*. "[C]ast off" from her family just like most other members of the rest home, the female protagonist yearns for her lost home and family until she slowly begins to identify with the other residents of Eden House (Boltwood 53). When the residents happily accept her Christmas presents, Cass suddenly understands that Eden House corresponds to her concept of *home* much more closely than her brother's house does. Cass, therefore, makes friends with people who appreciate her personality, value her as part of their group and, like herself, "[exist] only within the fictional world of the rest home" (McMullan 148). Thus, as signified by the reference to 'Eden,' Cass unexpectedly finds her own paradise in the home for the elderly, a place defined by the residents' fantasy world and their interpretation of *home* as a space where "elaborate alternative realities" are realised and where the space they inhabit is as much an invention of their imagination as a physical entity (Corbett 109). Having found a home outside the realm inhabited by her relatives, Cass soon feels needed at Eden House. Hence, as the rest home begins to represent the space she has always longed for, she gradually distances herself from her brother's family.

Harry's development, on the other hand, is diametrically opposed to Cass'. His concept of *home* and *family* is shattered on Christmas Eve, shortly after Cass has left his house. No longer able to repress the truth that the family will have "a quiet Christmas after all" because none of the older three children is coming home to celebrate with the family, Harry, Alice and their youngest son, Dom, return to Eden House (*Cass* 56). Inviting his sister to spend the evening with the family as a substitute for the couple's absent children and overwhelmed by his own emotional turmoil, Harry discloses his and Alice's private sorrows to Cass. He admits that the couple "haven't heard from Aidan for seven years, not since he went to Switzerland [...]. And then Betty's marriage isn't just as happy as ... as ... Even Tom at times ... the seculars didn't suit him

and we gather that he's restless again even though . . ." (56). I share Higgins' reading that Cass' "warmth and capacity for nurture" are two of the qualities that are missing in the McGuire household and that the family "only ask for [them this Christmas Eve] when it is too late" (18). In order to fill the private realm of the McGuires with a homely atmosphere and to reduce the sterility and bleakness which O'Brien identified in the homes in *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* and *The Loves of Cass McGuire*, Cass' personality and the qualities she has to offer would, indeed, be beneficial.

However, pretending not to be aware of her brother's visit and pretending to live in a world where his words can no longer hurt her, Cass does not acknowledge his presence in the room. Cass' last words after Harry has left the rest home illustrate that, for her, *home* has ceased to be linked with the concept of *family*: "(*To herself.*) Poor, poor Harry . . . (*She sighs at Harry's bad luck. Then brightens, looks round the common-room with calm satisfaction*). Home at last. Gee, but it's a good thing to be home" (*Cass* 70). Thus, Cass' process of having created her own space of comfort and homeliness serves as an example of Blunt and Dowling's claim that

> [h]ome does not simply exist, but is made. Home is a process of creating and understanding forms of dwelling and belonging. This process has both material and imaginative elements. Thus people create home through social and emotional relationships. (23)

Having realised that her brother's family are not willing or able to provide her with the *home* and *family* she has been longing for, Cass, at Eden House, succeeds in redefining her concepts of the two terms in order to fulfil her own needs and desires. Moreover, she makes friends with other residents who have started to achieve their concept of *home* and *family*, beyond the realm inhabited by their own relatives.

Although a number of Friel's characters find a small degree of ease and comfort in a (mental) space that does not correlate with their actual home site, *The Loves of Cass McGuire* is the only play in which the intimacy that is missing within the family is substituted for by that of other characters and in which the act of 'dwelling' corresponds to the quality of Heidegger's *wunian*, where one is said "to be at peace, to be brought to peace, to remain in peace" ("Building Dwelling Thinking" 149). Cass' phrase "Home at last. Gee, but it's a good thing to be home" underlines that, although the actual space and characters vastly differ from her expectations, she has found those elements of *home* and *family* which she sought when she returned to Ballybeg at the beginning of the play and which offer her some peace, security and provide her with a sense of belonging (*Cass* 70).

Like Cass McGuire, Frank Hardy in *Faith Healer* is another character whose homecoming is not met with immediate success and whose concept of *home*, therefore, needs some adjustment. As in *The Loves of Cass McGuire*, Frank's expectations of Ireland as *home* and as a site of his restoration do not correspond to the actual feelings he encounters when he first arrives "in a pub, a lounge bar, really" outside the village of Ballybeg (*Faith* 338). Associating *home* with a sense of familiarity, shelter, security, coherence and unity, the main protagonist describes the emotions which Ballybeg first aroused in him as "wan and neutral" and claims that "[t]here was no sense of home-coming. I tried to simulate it but nothing stirred" (338). Frank's life-long hopes and desires for peace with himself are only fulfilled when he deliberately sacrifices himself to a group of wedding guests on the night of his homecoming. After he has successfully straightened a man's bent finger, this group of "savage bloody men" challenges him to perform his art on a young friend of theirs in a wheelchair (374). Towards the end of his first monologue, Frank tells the audience that he immediately sensed that his healing of this handicapped man, McGavern, would be a failure as he "knew with cold certainty that nothing was going to happen" at all (340). Nevertheless, he asserts that he willingly accepted his fate "pretending to subscribe to the charade. [...] [T]he restoration of Francis Hardy" (341). His wife's description of the same incident, on the other hand, suggests that, due to his personality, Frank was not just resigned to his fate but actively sought the challenge: "I knew at once – I knew it instinctively – that before the night was out he was going to measure himself against the cripple in the wheelchair" (352). I agree with Grace's interpretation of this event, as I believe her view reveals an aspect of Frank's true character. Desperately trying to evoke some emotions within himself and "possessed" by the art that he admits he has no control over, Frank regularly embraces the chance of becoming "whole in [himself], and perfect in [himself]," regardless of whether it is in life or in death (333). Satisfying his needs to stop the "atrophying terror" and "the maddening questions" which he himself claims govern and undermine his life (376), Frank, following what Andrews defines as "the self-destructive impulses of the artist," courageously faces the consequences of his gift and welcomes death (160). Describing the last moments leading to his death, Frank stresses that

> although I knew that nothing was going to happen, nothing at all, I walked across the yard towards them. And as I walked I became possessed of a strange and trembling intimation: [...] that in all existence there was only myself and the wedding guests. And that intimation in turn gave way to a stronger sense: that even we had ceased to be physical and existed only in spirit, only in the need we had for each other. [...] And as I moved across that yard towards them for the first time and offered myself to them, then for the first time I had *a simple and genuine sense of home-coming*. Then for the first

> time, there was no atrophying terror; and the maddening questions were silent. At long last, I was renouncing chance. (*Faith* 375–376, my emphasis)

Hence, as Frank experiences death as "a simple and genuine sense of homecoming," *home*, in *Faith Healer*, eventually represents the main protagonist's sense of redemption and inner peace. The reconciliatory tone in the above-cited quotation shows that, for the first time in his life, Frank knows where he belongs. His "dislocation, his restless insistence on 'no fixed abode'" as well as his "self-loathing" have come to an end (Higgins 54 and 56). Whereas O'Brien suggests that "Frank is nothing without his questions. He is an instrument of faith, empowered and stigmatized by his gift," I believe that Frank's death successfully answers the desire for coherence and a sense of groundedness which he has strived for throughout his life (*Friel* 98). Death, as Andrews notes, allows him to escape from his own life, which has turned into a mixture of fiction and reality: "Frank Hardy is the fiction-maker who has sacrificed life to fiction and finds that he is the creature and the creator of his own fiction" (*Art* 160). By sacrificing himself to the wedding guests in Ballybeg, Frank frees himself from having to comply with his partly fictional *Dasein* as "fantastic" conman and faith healer (*Faith* 332). At long last, *home* and *self* conflate in Frank's life and his restlessness is replaced by a "definitiveness and completeness" which he has so far only experienced temporarily after a patient's successful healing (O'Brien, *Friel* 99). The main protagonist's final claim that he "was renouncing chance" displays that his longing for recognition, security and unity has finally been fulfilled and that his life-long search has ended (*Faith* 376). In her essay "Brian Friel," Niel argues that this night in Ballybeg, "Frank faces his skills and his failure as an artist and as a human being […]. After he has travelled around restlessly, he ceases to fight any inner battles, ceases any attempt to achieve something, and, by doing so, discovers some inner peace" (47, my translation).[46] I would suggest that Frank's death emphasises how strongly *home* and a character's psyche are linked and how a character's successful homecoming affects his concept and understanding of the *self*.

A fascinating variation on the relationship between *home* and *self* is found in *Making History*. In this play, the concepts *home*, *family* and *domesticity* are most closely related to Mabel Bagenal. As Hugh O'Neill's fourth wife, the female protagonist "crosses cultural, political, and religiously sectarian lines" (O'Brien, *Friel* 118). As her father's home is compared to Hugh's home after she eloped with the Irish leader, Mabel is faced with two different sites and sets

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[46] Original: […] stellt sich Frank seinen Fähigkeiten und seinem Scheitern als Heiler und als Mensch […]. Er gibt jeglichen inneren Kampf, jeglichen Versuch, etwas zu erreichen, auf und kommt auf diese Art nach seinem rastlosen Herumziehen endlich zu einer inneren Ruhe (47).

of feelings which are mutually exclusive. Having grown up as a Protestant Upstart in the New English community in Newry, Mabel is not only the daughter of the retired Queen's Marshal but also the sister of the present one. As the locals, unlike the English settlers, mainly breed cows and horses, Mabel was reared to believe that all Irish tribes are "wild and barbarous" (*History* 265). Thus, when Mabel elopes with Hugh O'Neill shortly after her twentieth birthday and joins the Irish community, she is compelled to settle "in an alien environment, removed from her own kind and unable to return to them" (Jones 139). Redefining her concept of *home* and reconsidering her preconceptions about her husband's culture and community, Mabel needs to decode and then to recode this foreign and formerly uncanny space that now serves as her new home. Thus, in the course of the play, Mabel consciously redefines the space of the former *other* as the space of her new *home* and *self*. The play skilfully demonstrates how Mabel repeatedly struggles with her ambivalent feelings, which still oscillate between regarding her new environment as exile that is connoted with hell and the *other* or as home, paradise and *self*.

Mabel's colonial prejudice towards the Irish and her concept of what constitutes *home* are not the only reasons that she occasionally feels alienated within the community. As a result of her act of hybridisation, of crossing the "tribal and cultural boundaries" by marrying outside her own tribe and community, Mabel is exposed to "problems that beset those who attempt to embrace 'the other'" in too casual a manner (Jones 118).[47] For instance, at the beginning of the play, which is set in Hugh O'Neill's undecorated and comfortless living room in his home in Dungannon, Hugh's confidants are rather reluctant to accept Mabel, "that Upstart bitch," in her husband's home and welcome her into their community (*History* 266). Having been asked by Hugh to show Mabel "civility" if a warm welcome is "beyond [them]," the Earl of Tyrconnell and the Archbishop Peter Lombard hesitate before they shake hands with Mabel, while both of them actually refuse to speak to her (265). Slightly disconcerted by the treatment she has received and eager to ease the tension in the room, Mabel tells Hugh's private secretary, Harry, that she could not sleep when she tried to rest because she was too excited and because

47 Mabel's marriage with Hugh O'Neill recalls Jimmy Jack's statement in the last scene in *Translations* where he wonders whether the goddess Pallas Athene might consent to marrying him. Contemplating marriage within the tribe (*endogamein*) and outside the tribe (*exogamein*), he stresses that the act of crossing "those borders" must not be done "casually" because "both sides get very angry" (68). Indirectly, Jimmy's utterance explains the deep distrust and the strong feelings of antagonism which Maire and Yolland's affair was greeted with by the local population in Ballybeg. Like Mabel, Maire is regarded as having betrayed her own people by bonding with the enemy.

the "noise" of the "millions" of cows outside her window kept her awake (268). Overwhelmed by the unknown and the *other*, Mabel underlines how exhilarating, and, at the same time, puzzling her new home and the pastoral farming of the Irish community is for her: "I'm all right. Just a little bit confused, Hugh. Just a little bit nervous. Everything's so different here. I knew it would be strange – I knew that. But I didn't think it would be so . . . foreign. I'm only fifty miles from *home* but I feel very far away from everything I know" (271, my emphasis). Obviously, Mabel still feels alienated in Hugh's house at this stage, as the concept of *home* she grew up with does not coincide with her new experiences. When Hugh presents her with a watch which he had crafted especially for her in London and when he mentions that, to his knowledge, Queen Elizabeth is the only other person who owns a watch, Mabel is so touched that, in an attempt to adapt to the local customs, she promises never to "cry like that again" and concludes that, after all, "[w]e're a tough breed, the O'Neills" (272). Ironically, Mabel begins to regard the local tribe as her new family and to feel at home in her new environment at a moment when Hugh presents her, the representative of the New English in Ireland, with a gift which she shares only with the Queen and which acknowledges her British background, which differs considerably from that of the local inhabitants.

Regardless of the fact that Mabel tries to identify with the Irish community on a superficial level, her insecurity with the local customs and her sense of displacement are emphasised several times in the play. For example, when her sister, Mary, comes to visit her, the stage directions indicate that Mabel is annoyed by "*boisterous laughter, shouting, horseplay and a rapid exchange in Irish between a young girl and a young man*" outside her living room (272). Yelling at the two young people and telling them to "shut up," she proposes that if they "want to behave like savages," they should "go back to the bogs" instead of loitering outside her home (272–273). Although she downplays the scene as an instance of "horseplay" when she realises that her sister "*has overheard her outburst*," the scene illustrates that, unconsciously, her attitudes still reflect the views held by her family (273). In a conversation between the two sisters, Mary mentions that her family now owns over a hundred hives, that they have their own orchard and vegetable garden and that their father has built a fishpond. Asking Mabel about the local inhabitants, Mary quite distinctly does not consider her sister as part of the Irish community. Mabel, on the other hand, determined "to face up to the cross-cultural, politically fraught transition she has committed to undertake" (Roche, *Theatre* 167), chooses to answer her sister's questions by identifying with the locals:

MARY. *They* have no bees here, have they?
MABEL. No, *we* haven't.
[…]
MARY. *They* have no orchards here, have they?
MABEL. No, *we* haven't.
MARY. Mostly vegetable growing, is it?
MABEL. *We* go in for pastoral farming – not husbandry; cattle, sheep, horses. *We* have two hundred thousand head of cattle here at the moment – as you have heard. Did you say anything about a herb garden?
MARY. Oh, that's a great success. […] I've brought you some seeds. (*She produces envelopes from her bag.*) I've labelled them for you. (*She reads:*) Fennel. Lovage. Tarragon. Dill. Coriander. Borage. […] Don't plant the fennel near the dill or the two will cross-fertilize.
MABEL. Is that bad?
MARY. You'll end up with a seed that's neither one thing or the other. (*History* 274–275, my emphasis)

Mary's use of the agricultural metaphor on the effect of 'cross-fertilisation' indirectly alludes to Mabel's decision to cross the tribal boundaries and underlines that the family will never understand Mabel's decision to marry Hugh. Moreover, it illustrates that, for the other characters in *Making History*, *home* is defined more easily than for Mabel. Albeit living only fifty miles from Mabel and her husband, home and enmity, friends and foes are clearly defined in Mary's world. For Mabel's sister, Hugh is related to the concept of *hell*; she even denounces him as a "traitor […] to the Queen, to her Deputy, to everything you and I were brought up to believe in. Do you know what our people call him? The Northern Lucifer – the Great Devil – Beelzebub! Hugh O'Neill is evil incarnate, Mabel!" (279–280) From Mary's point of view, her sister left Eden when she decided to marry this devilish Irish figure. Although Mary admits to feeling lonely in her big house after Mabel's departure, she does not want to diminish the distance between the sisters by familiarising herself with the Irish lifestyle. She remains convinced that, outside the planters' carefully ploughed and fenced site, Ireland is a place which is equivalent to hell and which is unbearable for a civilised English woman. The two sisters are, therefore, separated by an alien civilisation, different lifestyles and diametrically opposed outlooks on the world.

In contrast to his sister-in-law, Hugh O'Neill, who ends up living as an exile in Rome, cherishes his memories of Ireland as a place of happiness and perfection. This can be seen when the Archbishop Lombard, who knows how much Hugh yearns for his homeland, offers him a glass of poitin one day explaining that the spirit

> [a]rrived this very day. From home. […] Poitin. Waterford poitin. I was never much help to their spiritual welfare but they certainly don't neglect the state of my spirit!

> […] Have you some glasses there? […] Good man. This, I assure you, is ambrosia. (*History* 326)[48]

Referring to the poitin as ambrosia, the Archbishop indirectly equates Ireland with the Olympos. Lombard and Hugh O'Neill are thus placed in the position of gods who nurture themselves on divine food and potations found exclusively at their home site.

The different connotations with Ireland portrayed in *Making History* indicate that the complex meanings of *home* in this play are directly related to the point of view and the cultural background of the characters. Whereas Mary's and Hugh's perspectives represent the two antipodes of regarding Hugh's home as heaven or hell, Mabel's feelings oscillate between the two extremes. Her inner struggle and unease with the absolute concepts symbolise that the concepts of *self* and *other* overlap with those of *home* and *exile* in her case and are not so easily defined.

Similar to *Faith Healer*, where Frank Hardy's striving for unity and coherence is achieved by his death, in *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* the realisation of *home* as a place of fulfilment and happiness is presented as an unattainable dream and an unverifiable memory of the past held by Gar O'Donnell. Whereas Jones describes Gar's existence in Ballybeg as "stultifying" because the O'Donnell household is "a cheerless place" (18 and 20), O'Brien highlights that "[t]o Gar, Ballybeg has meant lovelessness, boredom, and the fecklessness of imperfectly realized ambitions," and he concludes that the young man's life resembles "an emotional and cultural wasteland" (*Friel* 48). Feeling uneasy and lonely in his father's house, Public Gar, therefore, retreats into his inner self, where he converses with his alter ego, Private Gar. However, the miscommunication or silence between Public Gar and the characters around him prevents him from realising his ideal *home*; his behaviour and actions bespeak his sense of isolation, frustration and exclusion. In fact, the state of feeling both homeless and ill at ease within the private sphere represents the nightmarish reality that the main protagonist experiences in his father's home.

Before Mabel eloped with Hugh in *Making History,* she and her sister Mary think of Ireland beyond her father's home as hell. Gar, on the other hand, strongly associates home in his father's house with hell; his mention of devils and his frequent use of the expression 'to hell with' serve as metaphors for his frustration with the private space.[49] In fact, several scenes in *Philadelphia, Here I*

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[48] "Poitin" is the Gaelic word for "homemade (illicit) spirits, once distilled from potatoes in a little pot (hence the name)" ("Poitin" 202).

[49] Gar refers to 'hell' sixteen times during the play, normally using it as a swearword and suggesting that women and children, his father, his friends, his alter ego Private Gar, Ballybeg and all strong silent men should go to hell. The only other characters to utter the word are

Come! allude to passages in John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. For instance, in the epic poem, Satan observes Adam and Eve in an embrace. Although he physically shares the same space with them, he feels excluded from their intimacy and, therefore, considers himself banished from paradise emotionally (Milton 119, l.505–511). In *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* Gar actually plans to leave his father's home in Ballybeg because, like Satan, he considers himself an outcast in the private sphere that he inhabits with his father. Feeling isolated in his home, Gar is dissatisfied with the private realm. As there is no understanding, warmth, nurture or comfort in the O'Donnell household, Gar's personal concept of *home* as a h(e)aven of happiness and love has turned into one which is associated with hell. Whereas Satan is convinced that it is "better to reign in hell than serve in heaven" and, therefore, deliberately chooses power, control and freedom in hell over heteronomy and the position of the outsider in heaven, Gar believes that he is not equipped with Satan's intellectual strength and power to redefine and transform his private sphere according to his personal desires (25, l.263). In fact, he lacks both Satan's reassurance and self-confidence. In the first Act in *Paradise Lost*, Satan claims that his mind is uncontrollable and his evil power equivalent to God's intellectual capacity: "The mind is its own place, and in itself / Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven" (24, l.254–255). In comparison, Gar is unable to mentally escape the misery that he feels exposed to in his father's home and thus he cannot realise his *home* as a site of comfort and happiness.

Escaping from his hometown and abandoning what constitutes *home* in Ballybeg appears to be the only option for Gar to evade the solitariness and silence from which he suffers. When his aunt and uncle happen to visit Ballybeg on Kate's wedding day, the relatives invite Gar to move to Philadelphia to live with them. Having hoped to be Kate's groom, Gar feels even more alienated and displaced in Ballybeg on this particular day. As Gar is highly vulnerable under the circumstances, his aunt's offer is tempting. As his girlfriend is marrying someone else and as he believes that he and his father will not overcome their mutual estrangement, Gar decides to leave for America, which implies that the lovelessness he experiences in Ballybeg is worse than any possible loneliness he might encounter in Philadelphia, away from his own home.

Hoping that a change of location will allow him to escape the feelings which his father's home arouse in him, Gar, at this stage of the play, appears to successfully repress the truth that his need for love and empathy will not be

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Gar's aunt Lizzy with two expressions ("[W]hat the hell was I talking about?" and "Where the hell is he [i. e. Gar's father] anyhow?") and one of Gar's friends who refers to 'hell' once when talking about a friend of theirs (*Philadelphia* 58, 59 and 72).

answered by moving to Philadelphia. Unless he learns to be more communicative and to disclose his inner *self* to those round him in order to find peace and satisfaction within himself, any future home will also feel like hell. In contrast to Gar, Satan embraces hell knowing that there is, quintessentially, no escape as he embodies the very concept. Referring to hell as a state of mind rather than a location, Satan exclaims: "Which way I fly is hell; myself am hell" (107, l.75). Tragically, the same is true for Gar: as long as Gar keeps his private feelings hidden, home is likely to be a torment no matter where he lives. Gar's departure will, therefore, only recast his sense of homelessness into a sense of displacement or homesickness.

When Gar's former girlfriend Kate comes to say goodbye to him the night before his departure, his phrase "[t]o hell with Ballybeg, that's what I say" causes her to leave the house quickly (*Philadelphia* 81). From a psychological point of view, the phrase proves how emotionally connected to his hometown Gar still is. In fact, trying to deny his pain and his fears of leaving behind the private and familiar space to which he has become accustomed and to which he is attached, Gar pretends to be striving for "[i]mpermanence" and "anonymity" in his future life (81). Privately, however, he admits to doubting his decision to leave Ballybeg, and he makes an effort to memorise every impression of the night before his flight to America:

> PRIVATE. Watch her [i. e. Madge] carefully, every movement, every gesture, every little peculiarity: keep the camera whirring; for this film you'll run over and over again – Madge Going to Bed On My Last Night At Home … Madge … [*Public and Private go into bedroom*.] God, Boy, why do you have to leave? Why? Why?
> PUBLIC. I don't know. I – I – I don't know. (110)

This scene illustrates that Gar does not really want to leave his home, which – if only it were connoted differently – bears the potential of being his secret paradise. Private Gar's expression "[t]o hell with all strong silent men" articulates the central point of Friel's writing and the true nature of his problem in the missing bond between his father and himself (*Philadelphia* 98). If Friel's characters were able either to accept a human being's quintessentially existential isolation as a *conditio humana* or to communicate and share some of their private feelings and thoughts with their families and friends and also endure the intimacy and privateness thus established, their quest for meaning and their yearning for a purposeful life in Ballybeg would be partly answered.

As if driven by an inner need to satisfy his yearning for happiness and for *home*, Gar, on the night before his departure, tries to undo the estrangement which defines his relationship with his father. However, the members of the O'Donnell household are all equally unable to perceive or understand the

other characters' longing for love and intimacy. Evoking a childhood memory of fishing on Lough na Cloc Cor with his father on "an afternoon in May," some "fifteen years ago" Private Gar, in an imaginary conversation with his father, recalls how

> between us at that moment there was this great happiness, this great joy – you [i. e. Gar's father] must have felt it too – it was so much richer than a content – it was a great, great happiness, and active, bubbling joy – although nothing was being said – just the two of us fishing on a lake on a showery day – and young as I was I felt, I knew, that this was precious, and your hat was soft on the top of my ears – I can feel it – and I shrank down into your coat – and then, then for no reason at all except that you were happy too, you began to sing […]. (89–90)

Wondering whether his father – "behind those dead eyes and the flat face" – shares his own "memories of precious moments in the past" (*Philadelphia* 89), Public Gar translates Private Gar's recollection of this afternoon to his father, hoping for his father's "validation" and confirmation of his feelings and emotions at this particular moment of their shared past (Higgins 13):

PUBLIC. [*with pretended carelessness*] D'you know what kept coming into my mind the day? […] The fishing we used to do on Lough na Cloc Cor.
S. B. [*confused, on guard*] Oh, aye, Lough na Cloc Cor – aye – aye – […] That's not the day nor yesterday.
PUBLIC. [*more quickly*] There used to be a blue boat on it – d'you remember it? […]
S. B. A blue one, eh?
PUBLIC. I don't know who owned it. But it was blue. And the paint was peeling.
S. B. [*remembering*] I mind a brown one the doctor brought from somewhere up in the –
PUBLIC. [*quickly*] It doesn't matter who owned it. It doesn't even matter that it was blue. But d'you remember one afternoon in May – we were up there – the two of us – and it must have rained because you put your jacket round my shoulders and gave me your hat –
S. B. Aye?
PUBLIC. – and it wasn't that we were talking or anything – but suddenly – suddenly you sang 'All Round My Hat I'll Wear a Green Coloured Ribbono' –
S. B. Me?
PUBLIC. – for no reason at all except that we – that you were happy. D'you remember? D'you remember?
[*There is a pause while S. B. tries to recall*]
S. B. No … no, then, I don't…
[*Private claps his hands in nervous mockery*]
PRIVATE. [*quickly*] There! There! There!
S. B. 'All Round My Hat'? No, I don't think I ever knew that one. It wasn't 'The Flower of Sweet Strabane', was it? That was my song.
PUBLIC. It could have been. It doesn't matter.

> PRIVATE. So now you know: it never happened. Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. (*Philadelphia* 104–105)

The stage directions in this scene offer great insight into the actual exchange between the father and his son. As soon as Public Gar mentions their excursion to Lough na Cloc Cor "*with pretended carelessness*," the father is described as being "*confused*" and "*on guard*," indicating that sharing personal memories and emotions is rather unusual in the O'Donnell household and this causes a certain degree of distress to both men (104). Although Public Gar "*quickly*" emphasises that neither the owner nor the colour of the boat matters and that it could also have been a different song that his father intoned at that time (104), he fails to create a sense of *home* which connotes ease, shelter and comfort by forming a sustainable "social and emotional" relationship between his father and himself, which Blunt and Dowling have identified as a fundamental element in the "process of creating and understanding forms of dwelling and belonging" (23).

Thus, Gar's hopes of redefining his current home by arousing a sense of unity and by reducing the feeling of dysfunctionality in his relationship with his father are tragically shattered. In his study *Home Territories*: *Media*, *Mobility and Identity*, Morley quotes Douglas, who claims that "home starts by bringing space under control" (16). Morley further indicates that, according to Descombes, a "(person or) character is at home when he is at ease in the rhetoric of the people with whom he shares life. The sign of being at home is the ability to make oneself understood without too much difficulty, and to follow the reasoning of others, without any need for long explanations" (17). Heller concludes that, under such circumstances, "[n]o footnotes are needed" because "from few words, much can be understood" (as quoted by Morley 17). However, all of the above-mentioned characteristics are missing in the O'Donnell household. Neither Gar nor his father "hear the similarity of their two memories" and they are unable "to read the other signals of love transmitted throughout the play" (Higgins 14). In fact, as FitzGibbon highlights, the result of the exchange between the father and his son is "bathos" (77). After all, like most protagonists in Friel's plays, Gar and his father despair of their inability to connect their memories with those of another character.

In Friel's plays, this deficiency is not restricted to the male protagonists. As soon as Gar leaves the kitchen disappointed with his father's responses to his memory of their fishing trip, the father asks Madge whether she remembers "the trouble [they] had keeping him [i.e. Gar] at school just after he turned ten" because "nothing would do him but he'd get behind the counter" of his father's shop (*Philadelphia* 107). Recalling how, one particular morning,

Madge's coaxing was so fruitless that he had to accompany Gar, who "had this wee sailor suit on him," to school, the father stresses the exuberant atmosphere between himself and his son: "I had to go with him myself, the two of us, hand in hand, as happy as larks – we were that happy, Madge – and him dancing and chatting beside me – mind? – you couldn't get a word in edge-ways with all the chatting he used to go through…" (107). Once more, the two characters' perceptions do not correspond; instead of understanding and empathy, there is a strong emphasis on superficial details. Claiming that Gar "never had a sailor suit," Madge falls into the same trap as the two male protagonists who, despite Gar's insistence that the colour and the ownership of the boat are of no significance, did not succeed in connecting their memories on an emotional level (107). Like Gar's father, Madge cannot react to the father's memory of "an imaginary shared sense of ease" which has since been lost and which both father and son desperately yearn for but "cannot replicate in the reality of their existence" (Corbett 40). Hence, the lack of cohesiveness and mutual recognition of each other's memories dashes Gar's, his father's and Madge's secret hopes of love, happiness and the establishment of homeliness within their private realm.

Whereas Beckett's main characters, such as Vladimir and Estragon in *Waiting for Godot* or Hamm and Clov in *Endgame*, often find themselves – to use Heidegger's terminology – 'thrown' into a world in which they are deprived of their rootedness and homeliness and where it is a character's responsibility to search for security and happiness, I want to suggest that there is a fundamental difference between Beckett's plays and Friel's plays (*Time and Being* 174). In contrast to Clov, who claims to have existed devoid of any positive memory in his life, Gar O'Donnell and his father resemble Nell and Nagg, the two characters in *Endgame* who can, in fact, recall moments in their past when they felt happy and 'whole.' However, in both plays, the memories of these characters do not coincide, which intensifies the characters' sense of displacement and uprootedness. In their study on *domicide*, which they define as "the deliberate destruction of home by human agency," Porteous and Smith stress "the importance of the home as a meaningful place" and distinguish between "an outward-looking focus on 'home as a centre'" which functions as "'a place of refuge, freedom, possession, shelter and security'" and "an inward-looking focus on 'home as identity,' bound up with 'family, friends and community, attachment, rootedness, memory, and nostalgia'" (as quoted by Blunt and Dowling 175–176). However, in Friel's writing, the struggle for a site equipped with these qualities, which would ease the characters' agony and provide them with a feeling of comfort and homeliness, is invariably in vain and, therefore, leaves Friel's protagonists feeling as isolated and uprooted as Clov.

Although Friel's characters no longer experience their private realm as a site which represents them and which contributes to their feeling free, sheltered or secure, Gar O'Donnell and his father are representative of Friel's protagonists insofar as their memories of former happiness and fulfilment function as a strong driving force in their lives, regardless of whether the moments they recall actually happened or how long they lasted. Moreover, I believe that, despite the Beckettian undertones in Friel's plays, his characters are more strongly indebted to Bachelard's credo that a human being's existence starts with a sense of comfort and ease:

> [W]hen we examine a nest, we place ourselves at the origin of confidence in the world, we receive a beginning of confidence, an urge toward cosmic confidence. […] Our house, apprehended in its dream potentiality, becomes a nest in the world, and we shall live there in complete confidence if, in our dreams, we really participate in the sense of security of our first home. In order to experience this confidence, which is so deeply graven in our sleep, there is no need to enumerate material reasons for confidence. The nest, quite as much as the oneiric house, and the oneiric house quite as much as the nest – if we ourselves are at the origin of our dreams – knows nothing of the hostility of the world. […] The experience of the hostility of the world – and consequently, our dreams of defense and aggressiveness – come much later. In its germinal form, therefore, all of life is well-being. Being starts with well-being. (103 – 104)

Born into their own home and family and recalling instances of exuberant happiness, fulfilment and security in their past, which Bachelard refers to when he talks about being "at the origin" of one's dreams, Friel's protagonists – having experienced these feelings – are convinced that these sentiments have only vanished but are no mere fantasy (103). The fact that Friel's characters associate moments in their past with happiness and their own well-being suggests that, in their cases, it is only in the course of their lives that their existence has taken on Beckettian characteristics. Moreover, in contrast to characters such as Vladimir or Estragon in *Waiting for Godot*, Friel's characters appear to regard the misery and unease which define their lives as situational rather than existential. Disregarding that their isolation might, indeed, be "existential," as FitzGibbon argues, they long to return to the past, hoping to rediscover their sense of meaning, well-being and rootedness in life which they experienced when they were young (78). However, except for the characters' memories of past happiness, the fundamental human need to find inner peace and happiness which Heidegger referred to as Being-in-the-world in the sense of "*Being-with* Others" mostly fails to be fulfilled in Friel's plays (*Being and Time* 155). Like Beckett's characters, most of Friel's protagonists lack the "[r]eleasement toward things [i.e. Gelassenheit zu den Dingen]," which the German philosopher identified as a "possibility of dwelling in the world in a

totally different way" (*Discourse* 55). As a result of this, Friel's characters are also unable to "dwell" and "to be at peace, to be brought to peace, to remain in peace," which would allow them to feel "preserved from harm and danger" or "safeguarded" in their existence (Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking" 148–149). However, in contrast to Beckett's characters whose life is presented as a constant reiteration of the day before, the memories of past happiness reveal that Friel's characters are preoccupied with their past and with disclosing their experiences and private sensations in an attempt to return to or recreate their highly treasured memories of happiness and fulfilment. Tragically, however, as the fates of Sarah Johnny Sally in *Translations* and the eponymous protagonist in *Molly Sweeney* suggest, Friel's characters, despite their life-long efforts, can never regain a paradise which has been lost on an emotional level.

Disillusioned with the meaning of *home* that the norm of seeing or speaking has forced on them and which they experience as a form of exile from their own private definition and former experience of the same space, the two female characters withdraw from society into a mental realm that is entirely concealed from everyone else. Thus, the only way for these two female protagonists to realise their personal concept of *home* is to abandon life within society at the end of the plays.

Sarah's muteness and Molly's blindness distinguish them from the average member of the societies depicted from the outset of the plays; from the public point of view, both characters are thought to suffer from a deficiency, one which the men they love try to obviate by teaching them to speak or to see. Temporarily, the women are, therefore, made to conform to public norms. However, as access to public intercourse or to sight is a disappointment for them, both Sarah and Molly quickly withdraw from the public space and retreat into a private world that is inaccessible to others.

The night before her eye surgery, Molly Sweeney expresses her dismay when she suddenly realises that she is going to be removed from the private realm which has served as her personal home all her life: "It was the dread of exile, of being sent away. It was the desolation of homesickness" (*Molly* 31). Looking back, Molly claims that access to sight and to the public world did, indeed, not offer her the feelings of intimacy and familiarity she was accustomed to before the operation. In fact, her private reality and world, which were based on imagination and fantasy, were much more colourful than the life she experiences after the restoration of her eyesight. At the same time, security and *home* stop being synonymous for her. Thus, when she loses her eyesight again, Molly withdraws from the public world and tries to rediscover her former happiness and sense of security. However, as with most of Friel's characters, the idea of returning to her former private realm, her former *home*,

is a futile undertaking – there is no homecoming for her. Her new mental space is no longer associated with happiness and contentment:

> I think I see nothing at all now. But I'm not absolutely sure of that. *Anyhow my borderline country is where I live now. I'm at home there. Well … at ease there*. It certainly doesn't worry me anymore that what I think I see may be fantasy or indeed what I take to be imagined may very well be real – what's Frank's term? – external reality. Real – imagined – fact – fiction – fantasy – reality – there it seems to be. And it seems to be alright. And why should I question any of it anymore? (67, my emphasis)

The space Molly lives in after her withdrawal from the public world offers her some comfort, but her immediate rephrasing of the expression "I'm at home there. Well … at ease there" indicates that for her *home* has connotations which are missing in her new world (67). Molly's access to sight and the public view no longer allow her to fully return to her former *home*. A sense of "ease" is all that she is able to achieve after her withdrawal. Consequently, her attempted homecoming is as unsuccessful as Frank Hardy's in *Faith Healer* and Cass' in *The Loves of Cass McGuire*. From a psychological viewpoint, Molly Sweeney remains in exile or in a state of resignation, as she does not encounter the type of redemption which Pine hints at when he argues that the "point of coming home, whether it is physical or metaphysical, is to complete an odyssey which began with leaving home" (*Ireland's Drama* 102). In Pine's reading, *home* is considered a place of reconciliation. However, in Friel's writing, the characters' homecomings do not allow them to regain a sense of *home* and privateness which was lost when they either left or were expelled from the private realm which they used to inhabit.

Similarly, Sarah's return to muteness in *Translations* is emotionally charged and indicates how deeply troubled she is after her access to language has proved a deadly weapon. Feeling guilty of having betrayed Maire's relationship to Yolland and of causing Manus to leave Ballybeg because of her gasp towards the end the play, she withdraws to her former space of silence. Having experienced the negative effects that the power of language can have, she loses the ability to speak after Manus' departure. In fact, she cannot utter a single word when she is asked to answer Lancey's questions. At the same time, however, Sarah's demeanour suggests that her return to muteness and to her inner self is one in which her conscience prevents her from feeling comfortable and at ease within her perfectly private sphere. Her newly established privateness is one which is charged with guilt.

Hence, the two women's experiences hint at the danger involved in forcing individuals to abandon their private realm and their individual concepts of *home* in order to conform to the norms and expectations of the majority. Sarah's and Molly's cases indicate that once they are deprived of their

privateness, which offered them security and happiness, their former state of peace and comfort can never be attained again. However, withdrawing from the public space and from society at least offers Sarah and Molly the opportunity to be less dependent on the power of those who rule the public space. They are, at least, no longer expected to conform to public standards as it allows them to re-establish a realm to which they can restrict access and which offers them a certain degree of independence and autonomy.

I believe that *Translations* and *Molly Sweeney* are, therefore, typical of Friel's plays: unable to regain their former happiness, the utmost his characters can hope for is to achieve a state of oblivion in which they forget the misery and agony that define their lives. Thus, whereas the term *Seinsvergessenheit* [oblivion, forgottenness, of being] has been used by Heidegger to denote a state in which God has either forgotten the human being or in which human beings are oblivious to the essence of their *Dasein* on earth and "have forgotten to ask about the 'sense' or 'truth' of being," the state in which a character temporarily forgets to question his own condition of being in the world could be described as bliss in Friel's writing (Inwood 72). In various rituals, such as storytelling or music (in *Wonderful Tennessee* and in *Aristocrats*), dancing (in *Dancing at Lughnasa* or *Molly Sweeney*), and healing performances (in *Faith Healer*), Friel's characters experience brief moments during which they feel 'at home' or 'sheltered' in a mental space of freedom and privateness to which no one else has access, and where they can neither be hurt or exposed to heteronomy.

This once more pinpoints how closely the characters' concept of *home* is related to their identity and their psyche. When the characters engage in performing these rituals or when Frank Hardy dies because he sacrifices himself to the group of young men in Ballybeg, *home* suddenly turns into a space of interiorisation or privatisation where they stop disclosing their inner *self* to those around them in an attempt to be grasped in their complex identity. FitzGibbon emphasises that "the disciplined fury of the dance," for instance, offers the main protagonist in *Molly Sweeney* the opportunity of "a more total, intuitive and self-expressive life" on the night before her eye surgery (83). As a result of the different "modes of self-liberation," the tormenting questions and the discontentment with the actual *Dasein* which Friel's characters are exposed to in everyday life temporarily vanish (90). For a short period of time, their strong emotional need of "*Being-with* Others" is either abandoned as they find fulfilment and contentment within themselves or it is fulfilled as they experience a sense of belonging and community in performing the ritual with the others (Heidegger, *Time and Being* 155, original emphasis). No longer feeling dependent on other characters' opinions or under their control, Friel's characters are able to experience a short and rare moment in which their

concepts of the ideal *home* and of *happiness* correspond with reality and in which their self is restored for the time being.

V. Conclusion

In Brian Friel's play *The Home Place*, the open display of imperial power by the anthropometrist Richard Gore and his condescending treatment of the local inhabitants when he plans to decipher their Irishness provoke as strong a reaction from members of the Ballybeg community as the invention of the stage-Irishman in literature has caused among Anglo-Irish writers for centuries. In fact, both responses underline how serious it is to lose power over language in Ireland's (post)colonial context as the local community runs the risk of being forced to live in a society in which the public sphere and aspects of public knowledge, reality and tribal characteristics are completely defined by the dominant discourse of the occupying power.

Unlike Christopher, who describes his cousin's study of measuring the physique of the Irish population in order to decode and categorise the different tribes in Ireland as "a perfectly innocuous survey," Con, a representative of the local Irish people, fiercely resists Richard's 'imperial gaze' (55). In fact, Con deplores the anthropometric approach of defining true Irishness as he considers Richard's undertaking an inappropriate manifestation of power that reinforces the power distribution between the colonisers and the colonised, jeopardises the local community's autonomy and silences the Irish inhabitants' personal points of view. Although Con argues that he and his friends are "[t]emperate men in normal times," he declares that they demand Richard's immediate dismissal from Christopher's home because they "find this measuring business offensive" (57). As Richard's experiment means that the local community will be deprived of the linguistic power to shape the public sphere from inside the tribe, Con is convinced that the final outcome of Richard's categorisation, this act of active surveillance and linguistic dominion, will resemble the stereotypical representation of the Irish as an inferior, garrulous and uneducated people which, as this study has shown, Anglo-Irish writers have opposed in their texts for centuries. Worried that Richard's dominant, public discourse will, therefore, present the Irish as the uncivilised *other* in Ballybeg, Con senses that, as in the case of the actual occupation of Ireland, the local community's personal "myths of identity" will be shattered and the Irish inhabitants' search for a stable and "effective identifying relationship between self and place" will not be achieved if Richard is allowed to conduct his survey (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, *The Empire* 9 and 8).

Since stereotypes of the Irish inhabitants in literature have usually been based on simple binary oppositions, Con's reservations are not without foundation. As indicated in the introduction of this study, Oscar Wilde

once mentioned that the prototypical attributes ascribed to the Irish population were primarily those that the (Victorian) Englishman repudiated in himself (as quoted by Kiberd, *Anglo-Irish Attitudes* 7–8). Thus, "the idea of Ireland" in Friel's *The Home Place*, as in many other colonial texts about Ireland produced by the colonisers' dominant discourse, is a mere invention or "largely a fiction created by the rulers of England in response to specific needs at a precise moment in British history" (Kiberd, *Anglo-Irish Attitudes* 5). In Friel's play, this point is illustrated, shortly before Richard's encounter with Con, when he indeed admits to Christopher's son that the deeper reason for conducting this study is to "reveal [...] how a man thinks, what his character traits are, his loyalties, his vices, his entire intellectual architecture" and that his research is, therefore, thought to provide colonial Britain with a key to "control[ling] [not] just an empire" but to "rul[ing] the entire universe" (*Home* 36). Thus, Richard's statement demonstrates that his anthropometric approach is intended as a form of controlling and disempowering of the community in Ballybeg. Hence, the local inhabitants' concerns about being misunderstood and misrepresented by Richard's private interests are justified by the experiences that the Irish repeatedly had throughout their history.

Against this historical and cultural background, Con is presented as a young man who is unwilling to accept Richard's colonial demeanour. Similar to characters such as Lord Colambre in Maria Edgeworth's novel *The Absentee*, the first-person narrator in Synge's *The Aran Islands* or Stephen Dedalus in James Joyce's novels *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Ulysses*, Con attempts to undo the development of displacement and alienation that the local population has undergone as a colonised country. In contrast to many other characters in Anglo-Irish literature, Con is not prepared to simply withdraw to a space which the colonisers have no access to while the colonised population's private points of view or their alternative versions of truth are silenced. On the contrary, he is someone who wants to voice his convictions openly and who rejects the kind of surveillance and control the occupying power is seeking.

Regardless of the fact that Con's outspoken criticism of the occupying power, his fervent disapproval of Richard's experiment, differs from other characters' less aggressive forms of resistance, the stereotypical representations of the Irish people in literature invariably evoked a response from the local community and caused a counter-movement. In their literary texts, Anglo-Irish authors regularly introduced characters who, like Con, are anxious to reclaim space, power and language and who attempt to reduce the sense of displacement, the lack of homeliness within their private realm as well as the alienation from land and culture by disclosing their private thoughts and revealing their hidden versions of truth. Striving to present a more

authentic picture of Irish inhabitants and of their country, for example, these writers have found numerous ways of allowing their characters to oppose the kind of heteronomy and disempowerment which the colonised have experienced for centuries and which Richard hopes to intensify by conducting his survey in *The Home Place*. The characters introduced by Anglo-Irish writers over the last three centuries are thus shown to physically and linguistically regain control over cultural and actual spaces which was lost when the Irish were colonised.

In summary, heteronomous representations of the local Irish community led to a preoccupation with space and to an obsessive *omphaloskepsis* in Anglo-Irish literature. Whereas James Joyce uses the term *omphalos* to present Dublin as the centre of the universe in his novel *Ulysses*, I want to argue that, as a response to what Anglo-Irish writers perceived as a recurrent *mis*interpretation and *mis*representation of the Irish population, *omphaloskepsis*, a complacent absorption with the self, aptly describes those characters in Anglo-Irish literature who indulge in detailed representations of themselves, offer minute descriptions of their private realms and alternative viewpoints to the reader and define the tribal characteristics of the Irish population in order to distinguish themselves from the images the British occupying power drew of the local community. As the imperial gaze of those in control of the dominant discourse threatened the local inhabitants' sense of *self* and autonomy by presenting them as the uncivilised *other* within their homeland, the Irish population's concepts of *self* and *other* were blurred. Consequently, as a means of self-preservation, a strong tendency arose among the Anglo-Irish writers to explain the true *self* to the local community. This pervasive trend reveals the Irish inhabitants' deep desire, or perhaps their ontological need, to possess the power to define their personal *omphalos*, their centre of the universe, regardless of whether it is comprised of their home, their private realm, their truth or their inner selves.

In order to be able to reveal their characters' alternative points of view and disseminate their private knowledge, Anglo-Irish writers have been forced to abandon their characters' privacy or secrecy to a certain degree. While Habermas argues in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* that, due to historical, political and economic changes, in the eighteenth century a semi-public space, a "[p]ublic sphere in the political realm," was established in the private realm which was distinguished from a "[c]onjugal family's internal space" of privacy and intimacy, it is precisely this most private space that has gradually been made available to the reader or the audience in Anglo-Irish literature (30).[1]

[1] The detailed description of Habermas' argument is found in Chapter II (p. 14–15).

For example, in the preface to Maria Edgeworth's novel *Castle Rackrent*, the implied editor beholds that "love of truth, which in some minds is innate and immutable, necessarily leads to a love of secret memoirs and private anecdotes" (1). In Anglo-Irish literature, the preoccupation with disclosing the private realm in order to satisfy the need of the reader or the audience who, in the words of Edgeworth's implied editor, "anxiously beg to be admitted behind the scenes" meant that no sphere remained debarred or hidden (2). Narratological choices such as James Joyce's use of interior monologues or the characters' retrospective representation of their experiences in Brian Friel's writing allowed these two authors to make the innermost dreams, sensations and thoughts of their characters known to the reader and the audience. This indicates that the message from Anglo-Irish literature is that, in a (post-) colonial country such as Ireland, nothing is private – in the sense of being permanently withheld or concealed from the eyes of the reader or the audience – because the danger of one's truth being perceived as non-existent is considered greater than the loss of one's privacy. Hence, in order to prevent the characters' point of view from being silenced or from remaining unarticulated, privateness was sacrificed on a narratological level.

However, the manifold ways in which Friel's characters disclose their private truths only mark the end of a long development in Anglo-Irish literature. Although in Friel's plays the unveiling of private truth often has a more complex function than in most of the other texts examined in this study, the playwright adopted and adjusted practices and approaches used by other Anglo-Irish writers to make them serve his own needs. Seán Clárach Mac Dónaill or Aogán Ó Rathaille, for instance, who tried to preserve their private experiences and their alternative knowledge, addressed their poems, collected in *The Poems of the Dispossessed*, to the inner circle of the Irish community – to those in the know – who had linguistic access to the realm of their truths and who, therefore, possessed the key to the poets' embitterment. Thus, the message of these poems is that the predominant themes of *dispossession* and *grief* are shown to be the result of the local community's loss of culture and sense of belonging when the Irish people were expelled from their homes and, consequently, deprived of their near-physical connection between land and self. However, withdrawing to the hidden space of their private truths offered some remedy to the situation as it provided the poets with an opportunity to resist being completely disempowered by the colonisers and it allowed the Irish to point to the occupants' distortion of reality in the public sphere. Despite the fact that the difficulties which Friel's characters are faced with are subtler and of a deeper psychological quality than the injustices and miseries encountered by the characters described by Seán Clárach Mac Dónaill or Aogán Ó Rathaille, in his plays Friel also makes frequent use of spaces that only

the main protagonist or the inner circle of the protagonist's friends have access to. Similar to the situation in *The Poems of the Dispossessed*, the knowledge of Greek, Latin and Irish enables the local community in *Translations*, for instance, to preserve a realm where the Ballybeg inhabitants can communicate their ideas and impressions openly as the British soldiers, who do not know any foreign languages, are excluded from their conversations. Moreover, Friel's plays *The Freedom of the City*, *Faith Healer* and *Molly Sweeney* are three extreme examples of texts where private spaces are invented to which access is restricted. In all of these plays, there are passages where characters utter their personal thoughts or describe memories that no other character on stage has access to. Due to these techniques of disclosure, a kind of proximity is created between the particular characters on stage and the audience which is greater than the understanding or empathy between the different characters on stage.

Unlike *The Poems of the Dispossessed*, which are addressed to the poets' friends or the local community, Maria Edgeworth's novels *Castle Rackrent* and *The Absentee* deliver a message to the novelist's former homeland, England, as they unmask the typical clichés about the Irish invented by the English. Explaining the hidden truth about the situation in Ireland around the time of the Act of Union between the two countries, Edgeworth primarily concentrates on the relationships between masters and their servants or landlords and their tenants. Taking into consideration that, according to Lehnert, Freud's psychoanalysis first provided people with the vocabulary that is necessary to articulate their sensations and innermost thoughts, it is not surprising, from a psychological point of view, that the interiorisation of the individual only reached the form in which a character meticulously describes the internal processes of his psyche at the beginning of the twentieth century (13). Hence, the relationships between the different characters in Edgeworth's novels are less complex or multifaceted than those presented in Friel's plays. Thus, whereas bonds between family members do not play a pivotal role in Edgeworth's texts, Friel's characters desperately long for strong family bonds. However, their dreams or needs invariably fail to be fulfilled either because the various members of the family have different memories of the past or because their inarticulateness in the public sphere prevents them from achieving their concepts of *home*, *family* and *happiness*.

Of those texts examined whose authors strived to offer an authentic account of Irish life and tried to represent the Irish population in their writing, Seamus Deane's *Reading in the Dark* or Frank McCourt's *Angela's Ashes: A Memoir of a Childhood* and Sean O'Casey's Dublin trilogy show the most similarities to Friel's plays as public and private issues are of great importance in all of these works. Disclosing their characters' private and

intimate knowledge, all of these authors engage in a process of challenging the myth-making by those in power and they participate in forming a new cultural identity by rewriting the myth of Ireland. Friel's writing stresses the implausibility of truth as an absolute concept and repeatedly questions the characters' understanding of *Dasein*, *home*, *family* or *self*. Therefore, some of the themes discussed in Friel's oeuvre coincide with the focus of Deane's and McCourt's texts. After all, autobiographical texts are typically concerned with identity-forming processes and with the first-person narrator's roots, sense of belonging and family. Moreover, as in Friel's plays, the attempt at self-definition or self-explanation is closely related to *subjectivity*. However, whereas the first-person narrators in Deane's and McCourt's texts criticise the political and religious leaders for failing to reduce the misery the narrators experienced during their childhoods, Friel's writing emphasises the psychological effects that the power structures within the communities, families or homes have on the characters. Disclosure in Friel's plays, therefore, centres primarily round the family or the character's self and is ultimately an ontological rather than a social or political question.

In contrast to O'Casey's plays, where the public realm is also predominantly equated with the political sphere, the distinction between what is public or private in Friel's plays is more multi-layered than in the other Anglo-Irish texts examined in this study. In fact, Friel's plays present a world that is more private and intimate than O'Casey's tenements. Although Friel and O'Casey both address poverty in their plays, there is a disparity in their approach to the problem. While O'Casey's plays suggest that, at the beginning of the twentieth century, social rather than political change is needed to improve life in the Irish capital, the main concerns of Friel's characters are quintessentially of a psychological nature and they are not primarily caused by political events or social class as in O'Casey's plays. Nonetheless, public and private spheres also occasionally mingle in O'Casey's Dublin trilogy as the playwright sheds light on the life of Dublin slum-dwellers, where numerous members of a community inhabit the same tenement. Hence, privacy – signifying a character's desire to find a space which no one else has access to and where one's dreams and wishes can be fulfilled – is a luxury that is hardly ever granted in O'Casey's plays. In Friel's oeuvre, on the other hand, the protagonists long for a sense of privateness that they can share with other characters. However, due to the characters' utter inability to communicate or to express themselves, their desire regularly fails to be satisfied. As fulfilment and happiness, which Friel's characters are striving for, are seldom found, privateness comes to represent a sense of emptiness and desolate loneliness, which the protagonists cannot overcome to form the closely-knit families or communities they desperately yearn for. Consequently, the characters' struggle with their

privateness is experienced as a form of isolation. As *privacy* and *intimacy* are concepts that are related to the characters' hope of sharing a set of feelings with friends or other members of their family, their understanding of privateness has a deep psychological, philosophical and ontological dimension. Thus, in contrast to O'Casey's plays, it is not poverty that causes the characters' great pain in Friel's writing, but their failure to disclose their needs or emotions to those around them. Incapable of sharing intimacy and privateness or establishing an emotional connection with their friends and family, Friel's characters do not feel securely embedded in their home, family or community and they do not experience their Being-in-the-world as defined by "*Being-with* Others" (Heidegger, *Time and Being* 155, original emphasis).

Although deficient communication and intimacy between the characters aptly describe the worlds portrayed in James Joyce's and Friel's writing, Friel's characters try more actively to overcome the separation from those around them. Although Eveline and Chandler in *Dubliners* yearn for love or recognition, Joyce's characters appear to be too paralysed to cross the threshold that confines their lives or to engage in a confidential discourse with other characters where their sensations, dreams or agonies can be articulated. Although intimacy is achieved on a textual level, these two characters' thoughts are kept as secret as Molly's desires and fantasies in *Ulysses*. In contrast, Friel's characters display a great awareness of their communicative deficiencies in their monologues or short disclosures. Whereas Gar O'Donnell in *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* condemns "strong silent men" (98), Eamon in *Aristocrats* mentions that his father-in-law's home "was always a house of reticence, of things unspoken" (279). Contemplating and even regretting their difficulties talking about their feelings with other members of the family, Friel's characters regularly hint at their deep distrust of language, and they are aware that even in situations in which the same words or grammar are available to two characters, communication always remains a form of "interpret[ing] between privacies" (*Translations* 67).

At the same time, however, I believe that Friel's protagonists hope to be able to overcome their inarticulateness and to bridge the silence that exists between them much more strongly than Joyce's characters. Constantly trying to express their ideas or beliefs or to provide extra information to justify their actions and thus to explain themselves to their beloved ones, Friel's characters appear to secretly wish that their disclosures and private versions of truth lead to a thorough decoding of their identity. Friel's characters seem convinced that if another character managed to fully grasp or understand them, their own feeling of insecurity and uncertainty would lessen and "the maddening questions," which Frank Hardy in *Faith Healer* argues define his life, would eventually be silenced (376). Tragically, however, the characters' attempts to

disclose their inner selves are normally addressed to themselves or the audience rather than to the other characters. Thus, their articulations do not offer the solace that they secretly hope for, as they – unlike Friel on a theatrical level – do not succeed in communicating the incommunicable.

In Beckett's plays *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame*, the atmosphere of bleakness and despair derives from the fact that the characters experience their life as if they were staring into a baseless abyss. Petrified at the thought of inhabiting a world with no apparent coherence or meaning, Beckett's characters cannot bear listening to each other's private nightmares. The tragedy of these characters is heightened by the failure to develop "[r]eleasement toward things and openness to the mystery," as Heidegger expressed it (*Discourse* 55). Hence, they are unable to accept the contingency of life or grasp its meaning. Although Friel's main protagonists also lack the inner strength and composure Heidegger proposed, they show an immense need for disclosure, hoping to discover some unity with their friends or family or to evoke some empathy in them. As in Beckett's plays, the desires of Friel's characters are rarely fulfilled; however, they remain unfulfilled for different reasons.

Yearning for human understanding and strong family bonds, Friel's characters do not share the general belief that Beckett's characters do: that they are "thrown" into a world that has been abandoned from the beginning. In fact, Friel's characters are preoccupied with their ideals, memories and dreams. Characters like Cass McGuire in *The Loves of Cass McGuire* or Gar O'Donnell in *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* recall moments in the past when they were happy and felt at home in their *Dasein*. Thus, from a philosophical standpoint, the outlook that Friel's characters have on the world links them more closely with Bachelard's than with Heidegger's understanding of Being. Bachelard's idea of being born into a home or "a nest in the world" in which comfort and "well-being" precede "the experience of the hostility of the world," the sense of isolation a human being is exposed to when it loses its primeval "confidence in the world" is represented in Friel's oeuvre by his characters' recollections of past happiness (103). These are so powerful that the characters cling to their fond memories of happier times in order to survive the gloom and desolation of their current Being-in-the-world. Hence, these memories function as an impetus for Friel's characters to try to resolve the tensions in their homes and families and to seek reconciliation with their inner selves. However, unable to move beyond the "existential isolation" that defines the reality of their present *Dasein* and incapable of communicating their sensations and desires for recognition, understanding or homeliness, the characters' most secret wishes are normally not fulfilled (FitzGibbon 79).

Whereas Beckett's characters do not feel at home in this world as they perceive the space they inhabit as fundamentally unhomely, Friel's characters,

due to their experiences, believe in their conceptions of *home* and *family*. As the actualisation of these concepts in their homes is problematic, however, it stands in stark contrast to their memories of brief moments in the past when their misery temporarily dissolved because their ideals of *home* and *family* fleetingly corresponded with reality. Nevertheless, at rare moments in their lives when Friel's characters are overwhelmed by emotions, when their attempts to overcome their inarticulateness are suspended or when the doubts that define their *Dasein* are repressed, for the length of a dance or a song, or at the moment of their death, the characters become oblivious of the conditions of their Being-in-the-world. For this short period of time, the life-long struggle of Friel's characters for happiness, homeliness and fulfilment ends in a form of homecoming in which the prevailing atmosphere of ease and lightness that defines their vivid memories is translated into reality and in which self and space finally merge.

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In Brian Friel's writing, the distinction between public and private is closely linked to the concepts of home, family, identity and truth. This study examines the characters' excessive introspection and their deep-seated need to disclose their most intimate knowledge and private truths to define who they are and, thus, to oppose dominant discourse or avoid heteronomy.

This study begins by investigating how a number of Anglo-Irish writers publicised their characters' private versions of truth, thereby illustrating what they perceived to be the space of 'Irishness'. The book then focuses on Friel's techniques of sharing his characters' private views to demonstrate how he adopted and adapted these practices in his own oeuvre. As the characters' superficial inarticulateness and their vivid inner selves are repeatedly juxtaposed in Friel's texts, his oeuvre, quintessentially, displays a great unease with the concepts of communication and absolute truth.

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